The Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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MR. HEM AND MR. HAW

TWO AMIABLE, quiet-mannered and unobtrusive gentlemen have participated in nearly every international conference in recent months. They are, of course, unofficial delegates; but they are tolerated, and at the decisive moment their influence is most powerful. They have not received that thorough and exhaustive consideration in the public press which has been so unstintingly accorded phlegmatic Anthony Eden, forthright Von Ribbentrop, volatile Count Grandi and truculent little Mr. Maisky. For that very reason, we exhausted every resource at our command to secure an interview with the universally acknowledged masters of modern diplomacy. One of the foremost statesmen of Europe, after months of very difficult negotiation, finally secured the consent of the contemporary patron saints of inaction; but the permission was so hedged about with seventeen bristling conditions as to be almost worthless. With only the gravest misgivings, therefore, we knocked softly, at the stated hour, on the door of Apartment 13 in the Hotel Lethargy, Rue Procrastination, Brussels.

A gaunt, unpleasant sort of person bowed us into a modestly furnished drawing room, examined our credentials and informed us in a pessimistic whisper that Mr. Hem and Mr. Haw were in conference but would, perhaps, consent to see us in four or five hours.

The conference dragged on interminably. Shortly before dawn the weary diplomats wandered uncertainly into the room.

"Our conference was a huge success," Mr. Hem declared. "It produced no tangible results."

"We were perfecting the technique we will employ in the nine-power conference," Mr. Haw explained. "We insist that every question must be thoroughly explored from every conceivable angle—the Versailles Treaty, imperialism, power politics, self-sufficiency, trade, minority rights and

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relative standards of morality. We also insist upon very thorough examination into all ethnic and racial considerations. In this way we prevent hasty action that statesmen might later regret. We are firmly convinced that the peace of Europe must be preserved at any cost."

"Were you responsible for the destruction of democracy in Danzig?"

"A minor triumph," Mr. Hem answered. "It was very easy to persuade the League officials to do nothing. Common sense demanded that they accept an accomplished fact."

"Do you think that any diplomatic action will be taken to save Czechoslovakia from the same fate?"

"None. Our influence is still strong enough to prevent any action by the powers."

"Why is Mussolini moving troops into Lybia?"

"We are not at liberty to divulge the reason. We can only say that if France and Britain become too badly frightened, we shall call another conference."

"Wasn't Italy responsible for piracy in the Mediterranean?"

"Mr. Haw will answer that question. He has been a member of the Non-Intervention Committee from the very beginning and is well acquainted with the whole complex situation."

Mr. Haw smiled broadly.

"Italy was certainly responsible," he said. "But we persuaded the British and French envoys to invite Mussolini to join the patrol to put down the piracy of Italian submarines. We also made it possible for Germany, Italy, France, Russia and other interventionist powers to maintain perfect standing in the non-intervention committee. France threatened to open her Spanish frontier even wider to permit the passage of men and munitions to the Loyalist government if Mussolini refused to participate in a special conference which would seek ways and means of withdrawing volunteers from both sides. At our suggestion, Britain and France retreated and the whole business of withdrawals is now being comfortably debated in London. We recently advised Von Ribbentrop to insist on the unanimity rule in the subcommittee and thus made it impossible for the four great powers of Western Europe to go ahead without Russia in accepting the British plan for getting foreigners out of Spain."

"What are your views on the Far Eastern crisis?"

Mr. Haw was very optimistic.

"The issue will probably be settled," he asserted, "on the basis of Japan's minimum claims—the temporary occupation by Japan of China's five northern provinces and the creation of a neutral zone about Shanghai from which Chinese troops would be excluded and in which order would be maintained by an international police force of Japanese, American, British, French and Italian troops. If this solution is not satisfactory to China, we shall propose a conference. Should Japan object to calling this conference, we shall propose the calling of another conference to deal with Japan's objections to the conference method for settling international quarrels."

"Would you care to express an opinion on the nine-power conference which is meeting here in Brussels?"

"We assume that the delegates did not come here merely to repeat the condemnation of Japan as the aggressor nation. The League and the United States have already done that. The debate should begin on the question of sanctions or the application of force. We expect the conference to continue for at least six months. By that time affairs in the Far East will have assumed such an entirely different status that we shall most certainly advise the calling of another conference to deal with the new issues."

As Mr. Hem and Mr. Haw walked with us to the door, we suggested that nothing worth doing will be done by those who have no faith.

"Hem," said Mr. Hem.

"Haw," said Mr. Haw.

Week by Week

The Trend of Events

POLITICAL experts throughout the country, in trying to gage the significance of the recent election returns, were confronted by a number of strange paradoxes. Jeremiah T. Mahoney, defeated Democratic candidate for Mayor of New York, attributed his defeat, in part, to the desire of the voters for a radical political philosophy. The people of today, he asserted, are not merely satisfied with a liberal progressive philosophy, but are anxious to accept something that goes beyond that. In Detroit, however, the conservative candidate defeated his C.I.O. opponent who early in the campaign had urged labor to rise up and "seize the reins of government." Thomas E. Dewey, special rackets prosecutor who linked crime to politics in his campaign, won a smashing victory over Mr. Hastings, the Tammany candidate—and yet the man whom he attacked in such a sensational manner, County Clerk Marinelli, somehow managed to carry his district for Mr. Dewey's opponent. On election night a few disconsolate leaders straggled into Tammany Hall's large auditorium. "It looks like our boys were out playing golf today," someone remarked. A few hours later the hall was completely deserted.

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What was generally regarded as the greatest political machine known to modern democracies had suffered its most serious and devastating defeat.

Anti-Trust

THE FEDERAL government has recently shown increasing concern over the problem of monopoly. The Attorney General's office is conducting a huge trial against the oil companies, charging them with acting too much in concert. The President, in his last fireside chat, expressed his hopes for more anti-trust legislation. Now the report of the Federal Trade Commission lists specific additions it wants to the Clayton Act, to make it more effective. Neither the American people nor American politicians have ever really decided how they felt about "trusts" and monopolies. The present administration has been most contradictory, relaxing under NRA the present ineffectual trust laws and now grasping again with apparent determination for Theodore Roosevelt's "big stick." We have undoubtedly always disliked the concentration of power that goes with monopolistic business but we have never felt adequately educated about the effect on wages and the retail price of goods and services of "trusts" and "trust-busting." Since from the viewpoint of competition, opportunity and economic vitality, monopolistic practises seem clearly undesirable, the burden of proving them useful from the wage earners' and consumers' point of view should rest with those who want them—and that is a burden which has so far been taken up more in a propagandistic than scientific way. We hope Congress acts upon the recommendations of the FTC and that the stage of full-blown "monopoly-capitalism" will never become entrenched in this country. If that stage has arrived, as many economists believe, let us try to pass through it as painlessly as possible.

Mr. Black Steps Down

MR. JUSTICE BLACK took no part in the consideration and decision of Haywood Patterson's application for appeal in the Supreme Court from his last conviction in the Scottsboro case. Much as we regret the payment of public funds to government officials who are not distinguished by a passion for work, we cannot refrain from extending a vote of thanks to Mr. Black for his magnificent circumspection in not participating, in this particular instance, in the work of the Court. Mr. Black, in his ardent quest for office and for the emoluments of office, has broken a number of precedents. We express the hope that he will continue to observe this particular precedent by disqualifying himself in all future cases involving a fundamental question of civil liberties. Eventually Mr. Black's position on the Court will be challenged by a party in interest. Until that eagerly awaited moment, much as we dislike to subsidize unmerited leisure, we would not strenuously object if Mr. Black received some vague sort of roving commission that would make it possible for him to complete the vacation which was so justifiably interrupted last summer.

Running Fight

THE WAR of attrition between the New Deal and the utility industry seems to be approaching some sort of a decision. A conference between James D. Ross, administrator of the Bonneville project, and the President resulted in an announcement that in finding a "yardstick" rate for electric power, a formula providing for the amortization of the government investment over a forty-year period with a 3½ percent interest will be utilized. This leaves the delicate problem of cost accounting, now being undertaken, to determine how much of the expenses for the various combination projects, such as Bonneville, TVA and Grand Coulee, should be allocated to the hydroelectric work. It seems sure that the utilities will have a wide field for future skirmishing. The Committee of Utility Executives meanwhile claim that during the past five years there has grown up an electric utility construction "deficit"—a lag between actual construction expenditures and what would have been spent on the 1923-1932 basis—of $2,600,000,000 because of the administration's "fixed punitive policy toward the industry." One can easily use that line of argument in both directions. At any rate it would undoubtedly be an excellent thing if the utility war would end. The private companies are determined to use all the resources of the courts to fight anything like public power. During November two federal courts will begin hearings on cases designed to spike the federal power program. The program has already developed into a major geological fact, however, and rates in large sections of the country have become unquestionably lower and power more abundant. The private companies should use this evidence in working out their cases.

The Jobless Census

ON NOVEMBER 16-17, 80,000 postmen will distribute 80,000,000 registration cards to every home, hotel and apartment house, to automobile trailers and, if possible, to those unfortunate drifters who have no permanent residence, in a valiant effort to determine, in honest and accurate fashion, the number of unemployed and partially employed workers in the United States. Results will be carefully checked in representative cities by experienced census takers who will make a house-to-house canvass of unemployment. Congress ordered the registration. A large sum of money is being spent to secure the

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required data. We are well acquainted with all the objections that have been urged against the plan and have, indeed, expressed a mild scepticism as to the scientific and practical value of the results that may be obtained. Be that as it may, we sincerely wish the project under John D. Biggers's able direction every success and trust that few people will be so busy avoiding work that they will neglect or refuse to accept President Roosevelt's very cordial invitation to register.

Poets

THE CATHOLIC POETRY SOCIETY OF AMERICA has been a going concern for so long that its friends and well-wishers need no reassurances about it. But it is brought before the attention of the general public in a way that promises both pleasure and profit, by the announcement that Robert P. Tristram Coffin will address the forthcoming meeting, to be held at the Waldorf Astoria, Sunday afternoon, November 14. The society's meetings are of two different kinds: work meetings, devoted to the reading and the serious criticism of creative work produced by members; and public meetings, which outsiders also may attend. These latter gatherings present speakers of eminence and authority in the society's field—not necessarily Catholic speakers, just as the members are not necessarily Catholic members; it is a fact that, among all the members of the local units chartered by the national body in about fifty cities and colleges throughout the country, close to 40 percent are non-Catholic. This is evidence as telling as it is welcome, of the definite, growing acceptance by one type of choice minds, of those ideals for which all Catholic art at its truest, must stand: purity of vision, health of purpose, constancy of discipline. That Mr. Coffin, among whose attainments is the winning of the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, stands for these things in distinguished measure, all readers of his work are aware. We have always considered ourselves fortunate in being able to present so much of the best of that work to our own readers.

End of a Melodrama

THE CONCLUDING chapter of the melodramatic case of John Montague was written in Elizabethtown, New York, when the jury sitting at his trial on a seven-year-old robbery charge, brought in an acquittal. Some personalities release the unusual, the bizarre, as the sparks fly upward. The debonair Mr. Montague (whose real name is Laverne Moore) is one of them. After a boyhood and youth which included associations and practises leaving much to be desired, he fled to the film city to escape the serious charge of robbery. There, in the glittering streets where so many go wrong, he reversed the usual procedure and went right. However, he could not destroy his tendency to go around the course under par, any more than other fugitives from justice can destroy their fingerprints; and in the end his golfing undid him, just as spirals and whorls have undone others. A canny police officer spotted him at long range, and he was brought back to stand trial. His acquittal was largely due to the testimony of his mother regarding his whereabouts on the night of the crime; although the jury may have been unwilling to impose upon a reformed character the only alternative left them—a verdict of first-degree robbery, automatically carrying with it a ten-year sentence. It is a strange, impredicable case; but even if one feels (as the presiding judge made it clear he did not) that essential justice has been done, one welcomes the corrective stories given out by Montague's friends to quiet the sudden legend of his having a "million-dollar contract" with movies and radio. If such a contract capitalized the crime angle, no one should want it; if it capitalized the personal reform angle, Montague himself should not want it.

Armistice Day

ANOTHER great war, George Bernard Shaw asserted in a recent broadcast, might destroy civilization in all but two great states, Soviet Russia and the United States. "No civilization," he remarked, "however splendid, illustrious and like our own, can stand up against the social resentment and class conflict which come from a silly maldistribution of wealth, labor and leisure. It is the one history lesson that is never taught in our schools." We have generally found it impossible to agree wholeheartedly with the venerable English sage. That either Russia or America is a great nation may be admitted but, judged by the same democratic standard, both nations cannot equally lay claim to that title. If Mr. Shaw's logic and perspecuity falter in one respect, at least we can concur with his view that the suicidal policies of many governments can have but one tragic conclusion—war. War in Spain, in the Far East, propaganda, economic and ideological wars, class wars, race wars, and now the frightful menace of a resort to armed force that will involve not only the military but the civilian population in the same common disaster. Never before have the forces working for peace been so well organized. But what is there to show today for all this splendid effort? Another great war has been postponed from month to month and from year to year. We can take courage from this fact and redouble our efforts, in the name of the Prince of Peace, to banish war and the fear of war entirely. This would seem to be the most enduring reflection as we honor, on Armistic Day, our soldier dead.

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WHAT I SAW IN RUSSIA

By JOSEPH F. THORNING

DURING the past four weeks I have been able to gather some impressions of Northern Europe, including Soviet Russia. The points visited were Oslo, Stockholm, Helsingfors, Copenhagen, Danzig, Gydnia, Lübeck, Kiel, Hamburg, Cronstadt, Leningrad and Moscow.

Naturally, the survey of conditions in Russia was most interesting. As the steamer sailed by Cronstadt, I recalled the early days of the Red Revolution when the sailors on the cruiser Aurora mutinied, murdered their officers and took the warship up the Neva to the capital, there to install their Soviets in supreme power.

The approach to Leningrad itself is not inviting. Every warehouse at the quay-side seems to be in dire need of both carpenter-work and paint. The only spot of cleanliness and modernity is the Intourist office where souvenirs are on sale. Incidentally, one may also change foreign money for Russian money in this office at the rate of about $.20 for the ruble. The purchasing power of the ruble is a little less than $.04. The Soviet officials themselves freely admit this, claiming that the artificial level is necessary in order to maintain a proper balance of trade. As a result, however, travel in Soviet Russia is just twice as costly as in any other country of Europe.

At St. Isaac's Cathedral in the capital, the guide was careful to point out a wretched piece of art entitled, "Humanity under the Cross of Religion." The edifice itself is now a museum for the exhibition of Soviet advance in the building and construction industry. The *pièce de résistance,* elaborately installed under the main dome, is a pendulum whose gyrations prove the motion of the earth. This machine was the center of interest for most of the Russians who were being shepherded through the hall. Near the main entrance are exposed two mummified bodies: one of an Orthodox saint reputed to have enjoyed the gift of miracles and the other of a pagan noted for his indulgence in the pleasures of life. The guide insisted that the body of the pagan had resisted the ravages of time more surely than the cadaver of the reputed saint. This point is of some importance in a country where the people still cling to the traditional Orthodox Church notion that incorruptibility of the body is the sole and sovereign test of personal sanctity.

Apart from the two instances I have cited there were no other gratuitous flings at religion. One asks to see the anti-religious museum in vain! The former cathedral itself is kept scrupulously clean.

I wish I could say the same for the rest of Leningrad. The first night of my stay there I took a walk through the city. Both my friends and myself were almost stifled by the stench that arose from the houses and areaways. When we questioned the guide about this strange phenomenon, we were told that a gas-mask experiment had been made that morning and that some fumes probably persisted in the streets and squares. Unfortunately, we remarked the same odor upon our return from Moscow some days later.

The truth is that soap is still very scarce in Soviet Russia. Consequently, it is hardly fair to blame the populace for its indifference to grime and perspiration. It must be remembered that Russia belongs to Asia rather than Europe and that bathing has never been a tradition of the Orient.

Leningrad has a grim, mournful air. Very few new buildings have been erected under the Soviet régime, while those houses that remained have been subjected to terrific overcrowding. I took several good looks at the cellars and basements along our line of march in the city. Every one of these damp, unsanitary places had its full quota of cots and beds. Scanty draperies sometimes shielded one occupant from the gaze of the others. It was all very Slavic and casual.

Boys and girls were swimming in the muddy waters of the river which forms a half-circle in front of the historic Peter and Paul fortress. Dressing and undressing take place on the narrow strip of sand which skirts the water. There were no piers, diving platforms, or even surf-boards! The people seem to take even their pleasures with a sort of stoic immobility.

Within the fortress itself soldiers hurried to and fro. Apparently, the wives and children of the officers and enlisted men also dwell within these walls which during the Red terror as well as in czarist days witnessed so much suffering and despair. On the whole, however, the cells are not any darker or awe-inspiring than the prison-block attached to the palace of the Doges at Venice. I happened to take a walk in this garrison town rather late in the evening and reached a side street that ended in a solid block of masonry. Suddenly it dawned upon me that I was lost in the very heart of a dungeon town notorious for its mysterious death warrants and departures for unknown destinations in Siberia. Addressing myself to an officer at the sentry-box, I was courteously and smilingly directed to the nearest exit. Night was falling over Leningrad and I for one was not

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displeased to reach the comfortable confines of the Astoria Hotel.

Our accommodations in Russia were excellent. This was quite contrary to what I had been led to expect. A number of French people in our party warned me when I left the ship that I would soon be the prey of lice and fleas. Nothing of the kind was at all in evidence. At every hotel where we were lodged, the rooms were as neat and clean as a suite in the Crillon at Paris. Bed-linen was immaculate, while there was no spot of dust discernible upon draperies or rugs. In fact, the only sign of scarcity I observed was in respect to the towels and stationery. As for the service, it was perfect. The valets and maids would actually run in order to fetch a decanter of water or a key. I would not hesitate to say that Soviet Russia has developed the most efficient domestic servants in Europe. At least, this is the case in the Intourist hotels. It is a fact that furnishes some clue to the engaging, friendly nature of the Russian people.

Our party had not been in Moscow more than two hours when certain fascinating facts were reported. One Frenchman was approached on the street and asked what sum he would take for his wrist-watch. When he replied that it was not for sale, the would-be purchaser pleaded piteously, finally offering one hundred rubles (twice the value of the watch). The deal was closed just as a Russian girl begged for a chance to buy a plain, cloth coat worn by a French lady. This time there was no sale. Nor could the Russian secure the pair of silk stockings she so eagerly bargained for. A fortune could be accumulated by any merchant who could introduce a shipment of first-class women's shoes into the country. If each member of our party had yielded to the pleas heard on every side, I'm afraid that the return trip to our steamer would have left the impression of Napoleon's army on the retreat from Russia.

On the boat, however, one enterprising member of the crew did a sharp traffic in Russian rubles which he had secured by means of the sale of the cheapest type of watches brought from France and hawked about privately upon the streets of Leningrad. I was told by a prominent French economist in our group that this amateur merchant made enormous profits (200 or 300 percent) on his merchandise. And, in spite of all the currency restrictions, the rubles were valid in Russia. Perhaps after this observation has been published, the traffic will cease. Russia is that way.

One innocent French woman, wishing to regale her family with the news upon her return to Paris, kept a journal of the cruise through the Baltic. Naturally enough, she took her diary to Moscow. On the last day of her visit to that city, she took a walk. Upon her return she found all her personal belongings dumped out upon the bed. Valuables were left intact—but the journal had disappeared!

The single outstanding achievement of the Soviets in Moscow is the marble-lined Metro or underground railway. Each of the stations is attractive, commodious and well-groomed. The trains are thoroughly modernized and schedules are maintained. If everything else in Soviet Russia were maintained at the same level we could indulge only in admiration.

Regrettably, this is not the case. The celebrated parks of culture and recreation, for example, are more like abandoned deserts than playgrounds. Even the few youngsters found on the premises wander about like lost souls. Coney Island (to say nothing of Jones Beach) is a paradise compared to these melancholy acres dedicated to amusement.

Since there were a number of social workers in our group, it was proposed that a visit be paid to one of the children's nursing homes or hospitals. We arrived eager to see and admire what the Soviet Union was doing for tiny infants. We were not prepared for the reality. Each member of the party was sick that evening. Several declared they could still taste the filth and stench as they partook of the luxurious dinner at the Metropole Hotel.

Most of the nurses were barefoot. Their uniforms, if the attire can be dignified with such a name, were reeking with dirt, blotches of blood and other unhygienic matter. One child with a severe cold was exposed with the others in the same room. No resident physicians were in evidence, although we were assured that three were permanently attached to the staff. The head nurse was obviously incompetent. She did not even bother to dislodge the flies that settled in large numbers upon the open sores of her helpless charges. There was neither refrigeration nor pasteurized milk. The Soviet officials were apparently proud of this set-up.

There is one phase of activity, however, for which I can vouch without qualification. That is the Soviet air force. It was our privilege to be present as guests of the supreme command of the air fleet at the national festival of aviation. That was an afternoon long to be remembered. Squadron after squadron of swift pursuit planes skimmed over our heads; the aces of the military forces dodged, dove, sailed on and off the field in what seemed to be an interminable display of power and daring. Without doubt the Russian fliers are the most reckless in the world. From time to time I saw the snub-nosed *chatos* models, the same type that I had seen locked in deadly combat with Franco's ships in Spain.

Anti-aircraft guns lined the field, blazing away at the successive waves of bombers which swooped down upon their theoretical enemy. Dirigible airships rode serenely through the cloudless sky. Four names were spelled out in large letters by

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the assembled fleets: Lenin; Stalin; USSR; and the Red Star. One of the airships was called Karl Marx. The largest, of course, boasted the title, Stalin. The latter's picture was likewise displayed at the beginning and end of the program.

As usual, the climax of the meeting came in the mass parachute jumping. All afternoon, three huge airships had been tuned up in preparation for this event. At half past six in the evening, the propellers began to turn. The crowd waited in silence. As the planes rose in the air, there was a faint cheer, the most spontaneous and enthusiastic outburst of this vast throng of 500,000 people during the whole afternoon. The ships rode far into the distance and then thundered down upon the dish-like valley which was the scene of the maneuvers. Suddenly, dramatically, almost as if discharged from the mouth of a cannon, the brilliantly colored parachutes with their pilots were released from the planes. At least one plummeted to the earth like a stricken mallard. The chute had failed to open. The others soared gracefully to the ground, forming a beautiful picture against the summer sky. Mother Russia had once more stirred and showed her might.

There were literally thousands of well-drilled, white-bloused policemen to guide the traffic which swelled up like a huge stream toward Moscow. As I found my way back to the National Hotel, I formed the conclusion that the Russian people, terrorized and panic-stricken by the flashing planes and gleaming guns, would continue to submit for many years to the dictates of Stalin and his successors.

THREE ENCYCLICALS

By GEORGE N. SHUSTER

EVERYWHERE in Europe there is tension, which the busy tourist season has cut across just as an owl flits through a wood. It is not unnatural that the effect should be particularly noticeable in Christian circles, since it is Christianity as heritor of the traditional civilization that now meets the onrush of a dozen revolutions. A dozen? The number is arbitrary. One may group the trends which seem dominant under such heads as "Communism" and "Fascism" without doing injury to a certain kind of logic. One may even hold that at bottom the two are as alike as peas, excepting for ideological coloring. Thus Mussolini's imposition of "patriotic mortgages" on house owners may not have quite the same intent as Lenin's war on the propertied Russian peasants, but the economic effect (the trend toward state solidarity) may be quite the same. Yet if one changes the perspective a little, it becomes obvious that there are also a dozen, at least a dozen, different kinds of modern revolution. Thus France is radically Leftist, but by no means communistic. Hitler is after all not the same thing as Mussolini. And so on.

Outside the Catholic group, Christianity is now gradually coming to mean for a large number of its leading proponents a code of living possibly definable as follows: public and private morals are realities only in so far as they rise out of the soil of the New Testament as that has been established by a Divine Saviour. It is in this sense that the Premier of a European state latterly declared himself a Christian. I think the heroic German Protestants are sponsors of the same conviction. At any rate, the code is so obviously widely held that some have even begun to speak of the liquidation of the Reformation. Whether that hope will be justified must eventually depend on whether attitudes toward the Saviour's divinity prove orthodox. We are not yet that far. An inner rapprochement between Catholics and Protestants is somehow being effected, but there are few outward signs of an impending closer union.

Inside the Catholic group, the great occurrence of recent months has been a deepening concern with positive action rather than with the omnipresent menace from outside. Not long ago, everybody was talking of the catacombs. It seemed that the Church was destined to retreat from the world again, to some modern equivalent for the cemeteries of ancient Rome. Today the concept of activity within the world is once more emerging. Catholics are again discussing, openly, earnestly, what they can do for man. I have sat in on a number of great public conferences and more restricted discussion gatherings. The theme was everywhere the same. What might one do to help bring nearer the time when the Church will redeem the world anew?

Unquestionably the major reason for this change of outlook does not lie in the now relatively greater weakness of the revolutionary movements, but in the significance of the program outlined in the last three encyclicals. Of course the movements are weaker. Many Communists—very probably the ablest Communists—do not know what to make of their system now that Stalin has abolished what was left of reason. An increasingly poverty-stricken Nazidom can still whoop up a lot of noise, but the noise has a hollow sound. In France all the extreme Rightists are wrapped in a feud not about the forty-hour week, that most

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stupendous of all Gallic blunders, but about whether Colonel La Rocque got a subsidy from the government of M. Tardieu! In short, the universe of the extremists looks just now vastly more like chaos and vastly less like the birthplace of new and permanent stars. Christianity seems to have a better chance, though it is a chance against overwhelming odds.

The three encyclicals, which are really three parts of one encyclical, make up a plan which is clear, virile and to some extent new. One's first impression is of course that they deal with three attacks which have recently been made on the Church. They discuss in the order in which they were written: the Nazi effort to establish a national German church; the Communist theory of a purely humanitarian tyranny; and the Mexican policy of a secularist state. This sequence is not arbitrary. If one reads carefully through the three, it will become quite apparent that Rome kept a soundly realistic view of the situation from beginning to end, so that a most impressive unity of attack appears. "Divini Redemptoris" is also a criticism of Fascist states, while "Mit brennender Sorge" could be dispatched to Stalin.

Yet what has interested everybody is less the attack on open or latent foes of the Christian faith than the outline of a program of action. Here the essential point, which none of the three leaves out of consideration for one moment but which is made with especial plainness in "Divini Redemptoris," is this: Catholic Action, in the sense previously defined by the Holy Father, must not be looked upon as the sole necessary or desirable form of activity. Apart from the union of the faithful under hierarchical leadership for the purpose of spreading the Gospel, there must exist organizations the function of which is to influence and reform society. Such organizations are not merely tolerated by the Church. They are imperatively demanded, as essential instruments of Christian policy. In short, the Pope here parts company with all those who held that in the twentieth century Catholic Action was to supplant every other form of activity.

Let me emphasize here that I am not merely making a private meditation on the meaning of the three encyclicals. This statement of the Pope's intention has been reiterated by theologians of the highest standing so many times that it has now become a commonplace of discussion. The encyclicals are in particular a refutation of the somewhat widespread belief that in signing the German Concordat of 1933 the Holy See has wished to consign to oblivion all organizations not strictly ecclesiastic in character. This Concordat stated, indeed, that both the Church and the German state agreed to protect only religious societies; but there have come from Rome in addition to the encyclicals absolutely definite, unequivocal statements that no criticism of the Center party or of its affiliates was implied, and that the Concordat was accepted with the understanding that nothing else was then possible. All this means that the Church desires, in conformity with the ancient doctrine of "indirect authority" over society, every effort, by laymen in particular, which will help even mildly to render society Christian.

Naturally this does imply that from now on a whole crop of wild-cat movements must spring up in every part of the world. The program drawn up by the Papacy is too explicit for that. It falls back everywhere upon the great messages concerning the natural reason, of which "Quadragesimo Anno" is a good recent example. It stresses also the right relation between the Church and the State, so that laymen acting within the realm of the State may know what their conduct ought ideally to be. I think one may say, in short, that these three encyclicals are a charter of freedom within the Church, though obviously all freedom is contingent upon the right coordination of parts within the whole.

One of the places where discussion of these things waxed particularly enthusiastic was at Rolduc, where the Social Week of Dutch Catholics met during August. It was considered obvious by a number of speakers that the new encyclicals endorsed heartily the work undertaken in Holland to organize Catholic workers and industrialists within the limits of a program destined eventually to include all the groups which comprise modern society. It was asserted that during recent generations hostility to Christianity has taken the form of efforts to relegate the Churches to the purely religious sphere while stripping the rest of life of all religious content. At any rate, whether the hostility has been conscious or otherwise, the complete secularization of society is a fact. Therefore any attempt to regain what has been lost must start with a new determination to approach all life "from the center which is Christ."

Much the same attitude exists elsewhere, noticeably (I think) in Belgium, where organized political Catholicism has been passing through a crisis. Yet one reason for the crisis was, many thought, the recent assumption by younger groups that "politics" was to be divorced from Catholic Action. This assumption was mistaken, not because Catholic political parties are indispensable but because they are permissible and sometimes inevitable. We in the United States need not think —indeed I personally hope we shall not think—of organized Catholic politics. But perhaps it is time to wonder whether organizations of workers and industrialists, of youth and of intellectuals, of professional men and of proletarians, are not imperatively demanded as steps toward the prevention of an omnipotent secularism.

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GINO CONTI

By STUART GOULDING

THE WAY of the Catholic artist is hard; how hard I did not realize until I met Gino Conti, sometime of Venice and Ravenna. He had just opened his first school show with exhibits from his St. Luke's Junior Art Guild and was torn between the praise of his Protestant patrons and the continued indifference of members of his own faith.

An Italian reared in the United States, Conti is a product of our parochial and art schools, a winner of art scholarships which allowed him to study abroad, an artist of recognized professional ability, an exhibitor at New York, Boston, Newport and Paris, a gentle soul who finds inspiration for all his works in the atmosphere of the Early Church, an originator of much that is distinctive and a genial and wholly impractical person. He is still a young man with the prospect of much useful labor ahead of him who adds to technical skill with brush and chisel an inspiration springing from a passionate devotion to the Church. In essence he is an artist-monk of the type well known in the Middle Ages; and to the Middle Ages he belongs.

Conti is typical of many Catholic artists knocking about the world doing secular work for pay, religious work for love, wishing vainly for recognition from their own Church. His history explains in great measure why religious art today fails to hold the high place and to exhibit the high feeling of the great centuries of ecclesiastical art.

As a boy Conti exhibited a talent for artistic expression and was sent by his patron, the convert Father Frederick Orosz, to Rhode Island School of Design. There in one of the most practical schools in the nation, whose patrons are textile industrialists, he learned the rudiments of art in conjunction and competition with a large number of other young enthusiasts. His ability was sufficiently outstanding to win him a scholarship in Paris. While there for a year Dom Willibrord Verkade's "Yesterdays of an Artist-Monk" fell into his hands and was a determinant in fixing his future course. Thereafter on visits to Europe he visited the great monasteries and churches afoot, studying and painting them, and lived for a time at Santa Maria del Monte near Cesana where he played organ for the monks and touched up their old paintings. For long periods he lived the life of a monk and his thoughts and habits today are those of a monk.

During these formative years his artistic work underwent considerable change. There was an illustrative bent to his school work expressed mainly in pastels. In Paris he fell under the spell of the Impressionists for a time. Among the monks he felt a stirring of interest in early medieval masters and today is inspired chiefly by the primitives of the Church.

Conti's present work roughly divides itself into secular and religious. He paints portraits of patrons in pastels. He has recently completed murals for Pawtucket High School and Rhode Island State College illustrative in execution but showing the influence of the Primitives. Occasionally he sculpts fountains and garden ornaments choosing young boys wrestling or in single poses for his subjects. But his forte is religious expression and in this work he most nearly approaches the Primitives he so greatly admires. Here his peculiar genius reveals itself. He has studied the formal art of the Egyptians and the somewhat stylized art of the Early Church. And he has painted and carved great numbers of Madonnas, each one of which breathes a mystical quality.

I found Conti the Sunday before his school's exhibit at work on a life-size block of wood which he was transforming with chisel into a statue of the Madonna bearing the Infant in her arms. The garments of the Mother were in the oddly stiff manner of the Early Church, the faces of both Mother and Child bore idealized features, the body of the Child was kicking, healthy, the impression one of brooding quiet. Here was a concept original yet traditional, far removed from present-day things yet close to the heart of all time. The longer one gazed at the half-completed statue the greater grew its spell.

No less remarkable than his form is the color Conti applies. He occupies an old shack which he has converted into a distinctive studio. There he has used primary colors only to achieve astonishing results. To give brief illustration: one chest bears many candles in all hues of the spectrum so arranged that they progress from red, orange and yellow through the greens and blues to deep purple. The refreshing combination is so simple that one wonders why no one else thought to do it. So in his paintings and sculptures; the colors are bright and bold but combined with such exacting skill that they refresh eyes and spirit.

I am doubtful whether I have adequately conveyed the spirit of Conti's work and the religious feeling they invoke. My own likes are for an Innes and Lucioni in landscape paintings, for a Bellows in a lithograph, for the old masters in paintings and etchings. And I was quite prepared

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to dislike Conti's works from first sight. But they grow on the observer and I found on study that they expressed a message not to be ignored.

Despite the religious nature of his best works Conti, like so many other young Catholic artists, experiences difficulty in gaining Church recognition. Not at all a man to push himself he has proven a miserable salesman for his own works. He estimated, for example, on the redecoration of a Catholic church and while his price was not too high the pastor objected to the time he would require. "Oh, I've got to get the church redecorated in two weeks," he said. "I can't have it cluttered up with scaffolding and canvas for half a year." But Conti complains justly enough that while a commercial painter can redecorate a church in two weeks it will still look like a commercial job and not like a work of art.

Everywhere he has turned he has found among Catholics a lack of appreciation for what he is trying to do, an impatience with the time he requires to do it. When it is realized that he requires two weeks to complete a two-foot wooden statuette of Madonna and Child, the impatience of the clergy is understandable to all practical persons living in the speed of the twentieth century. All practical persons with any understanding of art will also concede, however, that a Michelangelo could not have done the Sistine Chapel ceiling in two weeks and that even lesser artists of his time wouldn't have attempted minor ecclesiastical decoration within time limits.

So Conti stands without church commissions and his fellow artists stand with him looking agape and in dismay at the whirling world around them. Just why a church needs to be decorated within a time limit is incomprehensible to them and seems a little unnecessary to many more of us.

As I stood waiting for a trolley car after work at dawn this morning I looked up at the silhouette of our neo-Gothic cathedral now nearly 100 years old. Nearly a century after its building it betrays the haste of its builders in its lack of refinements, in its heavy cast and in its sacrifice to speed. Uninspired, it is uninspiring, and in sharp contrast to the ancient cathedrals of the old world. A contractors' monument reared in brief measure, it cannot and is never compared to the centuries-in-the-making masterpieces of Europe.

So it is with all true art. Some artists work swiftly to complete their tasks but few have ever lived who can complete masterpieces in time limits set by non-artists. Unable and unwilling to do his best for the Church within time limits, Conti turns to secular work for a living. And because he cannot help himself he continues to turn out religious works without other reward than the love of doing them.

One thing of immediate practical value of a religious nature is the establishment of his St. Luke's Junior Art Guild. Last year, devoting three hours weekly to them, he instructed thirteen children in the rudiments of religious art. His course embraced a study of the essentials of all art, a history of the art of the Church and its music, practical training with hands and eyes. Like most good instructors he allowed youthful imagination full sway with the result that while much of the children's work is crude it also has originality, color and strength. One group of carved balsa wood figurines, brightly painted in the primaries, stood out in his exhibit for the life, individuality and artistry they displayed. In one year Conti has vindicated his opening a school and has started the training of one small group which, while it may produce no geniuses, at least will bring forth students in the appreciation of Catholic art. Oddly, most of his pupils to date have been non-Catholics. Oddly, his patrons almost exclusively have been non-Catholics.

Conti has turned to the Early Church for inspiration because he sees in it, as in the Church today, a Church "ready to unfold to unlimited horizons."

"We Christians," he says, "should not be content to sleep in self-satisfaction at the false beauty in degenerate art. Beauty and truth cry for justice, resurrection."

But it is hard to sell that message to the present-day world. Other Catholic artists have tried it and failed. He would be doing a kindness to the Contis of this world who would supply them simple cells, food, brushes and paints, chisels and wood or stone, walls and ceilings to cover—and then forget them. They ask no more and collectively they would bring that revival in religious art about which those of us who are not artists prate so much.

Fortunately for Gino Conti's future in the Church the diocesan weekly in his section has taken up his cause and following the lead of secular dailies who discovered him long ago has started to publicize his work among Catholics. We may yet see something of his work permanently saved to the Church. But Gino Conti is but one Catholic artist starved for recognition among his own. His fellows still wait for the Church to beat paths to their doors.

Christ at the Well

Give me to drink this desert wine,
This water welled by men;
Amen, I say, but drink of mine,
You shall not thirst again.

Give me to drink, for I am I,
Begging from earthen jars,
Who plunged the Dipper in the sky
And splashed the night with stars.

FRAY ANGELICO CHAVEZ.

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WOMEN AND THE MODERN CRISIS

By ANNA HELLERSBERG-WENDRINER

IT IS in Berlin, in the late fall of 1932. A mass of people crowds into a gigantic auditorium: young laborers and students, typical of that classless youth and the war and post-war years in Germany. National Socialist and Communist speakers are about to talk on the basic principles of their views. The speakers come forward. These are no shrill-voiced fanatics or propagandists, but thinking and excited human beings. Their earnestness draws the tribute of absolute silence. Freedom of speech is still granted. The clock shows ten, eleven, twelve. Among all these tired people not one leaves the hall.

Finally one group of very young persons goes out, confused and profoundly shaken. Too excited to go home, they find themselves between the book-lined walls of a small living room. There they continue to talk, in a subdued, almost reverent manner. Intentionally or by chance, one of them suddenly picks out a little book. He begins to read, softly at first, and then more loudly. The grand rhythm of a solemn, biblical archaic language flows into this world-weary room.

Here is the soul addressing the Church and the Church replying to the soul. The soul wells forth from the confusion of the modern mind and is blessed with the clarity of the Holy Spirit. The sureness and the strength of the believing heart of a contemporary human being imparts itself to these young seekers. The most undirected and confused of any generation that ever trod on German soil finds a moment of clarity in an hour of unforgettable rapture. The book is Gertrud von le Fort's "Hymns to the Church." This was not an isolated case, the eventful meeting of these young people. It is a typical occurrence.

The "Hymns to the Church" had appeared eight years before. The voice heard here had not been that of a young person. The wisdom of middle age, the strength and tenderness of old cultures, had developed the voice of this spirit which knows so much of the world and what is beyond it. Gertrud von le Fort was born in Minden in Westphalia, a little town in West Germany, in 1876. She is the descendant of a family of Huguenots, endowed with the precious combination of durance and German spirituality. The subjective event of her conversion becomes in Gertrud von le Fort the objective strength of the apostle. Her conversion to the Church was not only an emotional, it was above all a scientific, decision. Ernst Troeltsch, the most vital spirit among the Protestant theologians of the pre-war era, counted her among his pupils.

In 1934, a philosophical treatise was published, a unique and important book which expressed the focal point of her metaphysics: "Eternal Woman: Woman in Time: Timeless Woman." Here we find the idea of self-surrender as the actual mainspring of Gertrud von le Fort's spiritual world. This idea is the supporting pillar in her hierarchy of values, the source of light in her conception of the world and of human life. The book represents woman as the symbol of self-surrender. It is not the empirical but rather the cosmic and metaphysical aspect of woman. We are concerned here with "femininity as a mystery, its religious significance and its ultimate reflection in God." The awareness of relativity is woman's characteristic; at the same time it is a symbol of religion in general. In the scene of the Annunciation, in the devout *Fiat* of the Virgin, Gertrud von le Fort sees symbolized the metaphysical aspect of woman, and at the same time the humility and reverence of God's creatures in general. In accordance with the Marian dogma, she proscribes this *Fiat*, the sacred word of devotion, as the salvation of an age which suffers from an overestimation of human nature. The Promethean cosmic will of man is the sign of the decline of the modern world. Lack of humility signifies the end and the collapse of a culture. It is the cause of that sterile self-sufficiency which the rising generation of today is struggling to overcome in its fight against individualism.

In the treatise the idea of self-surrender is embodied in dogmatic symbols; in the novels by Gertrud von le Fort the symbols are taken from life in an effort to personify the same idea. Whether they are novels of our day or historical stories, they are born of the spirit of our own present life and envision a solution which illuminates them with the *Fiat* of the Annunciation. In 1928, the first great Catholic novel of the author was published, "The Veil of Veronica." It describes the relation of contemporary human beings to self-surrender and salvation. Here we find a psychology and sociology of grace. We see four women living in one household. There is hardly any action. All the happenings are of a spiritual nature. The figures seem to be transparent. They do not act either with or against each other. But for each one a reality develops which actually exists only in herself and for herself. For each an individual salvation is accomplished. Different stages are represented: not self-surrendering; self-surrendering; accepting salvation without resistance; finding salvation after long torments. Three

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generations of the same family represent three of these different grades of self-surrender. In addition to these, a servant of the family represents the fourth stage.

This ministering spirit is the really perfect one, from the point of view of self-surrender. She, the servant, stands at the highest pinnacle of grace. Her devotion to God is one with her devotion to human beings. The psychology and sociology of grace, of which the book treats, culminates in this devout little Jeannette. In her is found the nucleus of the author's metaphysics.

Furthest removed from this ministering soul is the oldest stage of the novel's generations, the grandmother, the mistress of the domestic domain. With her lonely self-sufficiency, her belief in the reasonable powers of history and in the importance of the individual great man, she is the symbol of an era of individualism that is coming to a close. In the scale of self-surrender the grandmother is the soul that did not find the road to grace.

Next to the pride and the dark dignity of this grandmother we find the light and ephemeral figure of the granddaughter, like a sunray playing about a heavy column. The author gives her the name of the book's title, and she is represented in the first person, recording her memoirs through its means. The ease with which it is possible to attain the grace of salvation is the basic theme drawn by this character. Her contemporary significance is made clear to us through a companion of her generation who is the thinking consciousness of their spiritual situation. Enzio is a young German poet of the expressionist generation. In him and in Veronica is embodied that cosmic fear which must befall a generation which, through the crisis of its own era, perceives in itself the limitations of human reason. Cosmic fear is a primary motive of the poet. It shows itself in Enzio's thinking and in Veronica's feeling.

To proceed out of this cosmic fear, this forlorn state, into the readiness for self-surrender, is the general universal factor which imparts to this generation its historical significance. The feeling of weakness which finds expression in her outcry, "God, how forlorn is man in the universe!" becomes in these young human beings the religious strength for self-surrender. The good fortune of being in this state of mind is significantly emphasized by a third and intermediary stage, represented by a person belonging to the generation between grandmother and granddaughter, a person in whom the conflict between devotion and self-assertion lasts throughout a painful life of indecision, until she becomes capable, shortly before her death, of understanding the collaboration of man in the work of salvation, by self-surrender.

The development from grandmother to granddaughter represents a spiritual progress of the times. For that which appears in the third generation as weakness, the feeling of a cosmic fear, is, from a religious point of view, its strength. The basic revelation on which this novel and all other writings of Gertrud von le Fort are built is contained in one sentence from "Eternal Woman": "Man's limitations are forever the door through which God enters." And there is an interpretation of the religious soil in which the cosmic fear of modern man is nourished, a phrase which concentrates the metaphysical character of the work into a formula: "Man's soul is anchored in the universe only and alone through God's mercy, and as soon as it separates itself from this mercy, it becomes unrecognizable."

In the devotional hierarchy of this first novel we find a framework within which it is easy to fit the characters of the following novels. Two years after "Veronica," in 1930, there appeared "The Pope of the Ghetto." In it the world of the twelfth century unfolds itself. Christian, Jewish and pagan characters and crowds move through the streets of the Eternal City. But in spite of the picturesque abundance of characters, the real action is clear and simple. All this impressive life exists only for the purpose of showing the little, modestly concealed central character, a simple and holy phenomenon in the midst of the abundance of the life about it.

In spite of all the masculine strength and grandeur which here take shape in individual characters, in groups and in parties, the secret fertility of life is embodied in the most insignificant character of the novel. Trophaea, who lives unknown and despised in the darkness of the ghetto, a small, blind Jewish girl, emerges from all the turbulence of battle as the victor. Through the sacrificing and devoted energy of her heart, it is she who solves the confusion of events. Spiritually she rises above her brother, who in proud self-exaltation despises his ghetto origin, who reaches for Saint Peter's throne without possessing that Christian modesty, that Christian love, or that will-to-devotion which might make him worthy of that crown of crowns.

Trophaea, the little blind girl, finds the way to surrender herself to devotion, and in this respect she belongs in the devotional hierarchy of the first novel. In so far as she sacrifices herself for someone else, however, we are in the realm of a new theme. The sociological signficance of dedication is more intensified in the second than in the first novel.

One step further in this direction is the short story, "The Song at the Scaffold," which appeared in 1931. Here we see self-sacrifice performed not for a close relative but for the community. Sixteen nuns from a Carmelite cloister in Compiègne fall victim to the cruelty of the French Revolution. Among them is Blanche de la

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Force, a small young creature, a bundle of fear who lives the life of a hunted animal driven from one fear into another even before the turbulence of events gives an objective cause for her fear. This girl, whom fear of the world drove into the cloister, who, in other words, sought self-surrender because of a cosmic fear in the truest sense of the word, finally dies more willingly than all the others. When the guillotine silences the last voice of the Sisters who walk singing through the crowds, there suddenly arises from out that mob the voice of this girl, like the voice of a bird. At the same moment she dies, beaten to death by the crowd. Again the smallest, the weakest, the most despised and insignificant one is the carrier of the spiritual action.

All these little, despised, insignificant figures, these inward-turning souls, stand in contrast to the collapsing generation of unproductive masculinity. In these gentle, feminine characters Gertrud von le Fort brings the message of the fertility of quietude, of the humility of devotion. She chooses these figures not to prove woman's higher religious life, but to set up the power of the inner life in opposition to a noisy, self-satisfied age. Through these quiet, unassuming women, through their weakness and cosmic fear, the author indicates the spot at which grace may gain admittance to the soul of the modern man.

The work of Gertrud von le Fort can be understood only when we regard her as a human being living at the end of one era and the beginning of another. In her own spiritual situation, she is herself the symbol of this transition. She, whose Protestant ancestors suffered persecutions for the sake of Protestant liberty, is the symbol of a fresh need for religious ties, a need which could develop to this intensity only after the errors of liberty. Beneath all these self-surrendering characters, in whom the metaphysical life of woman assumes form, there is hidden the author's own destiny of dedication, the story of her conversion. These characters are no cold-blooded constructions, they spring from the feeling of one who feels, the life of one who lives. She comprehends the fate of her own conversion not as an individual, but as a more than personal, a necessary, event of an age that is finding its way back to transcendental thought.

When a number of works of cultural import appear in an era poor in culture, more than a new phase of literature is signified. The new power of poetic utterance is merely an expression of the fact that the creative human being has found his way back to the unifying view of the world, a view that sees natural, small human events in the light of eternal verities. It is not the isolated cultural product that is significant and decisive; the important thing is the existence of a spirituality which conditions and makes possible such a product.

PROVEN MUSIC

By PAUL BUSSARD

A CLEAN wind was blowing. Leaves had long since fallen and merged with the ground. Trees had retreated within themselves. Hills, shorn of flowers, seemed smaller. Therefore the clean wind blew with abandon across a landscape which placed small hindrance to her sweeping flight.

The wind blew across the still landscape. The sun shined bravely upon the stillness, broken only by the song of the clean wind and the footsteps of Pierrot who walked with Columbine and another person in the sunshine and through the blowing wind.

Pierrot had just finished saying, "I wouldn't try." He had said it as one would say no and nothing else to a tiring but untired petitioner. This did not discourage him because the person went on, "Why would you not try? I am not unreasonable. I have asked you only to prove for me those beliefs you hold, and hold to be reasonable. Not being a simpleton I am anxious about not having my soul die and cease. I would respect God if He were proven to me. And if He were, I should do all I felt sure He wished."

"Perhaps," said Pierrot, "on a day the sun is gone with its light and the wind with its music, I should. But today I would rather you would cease persistently demanding what it bores me to say."

The wind blew about them as they walked across the landscape. It blew Columbine's scarf cunningly. Little dry leaves, that they stirred up in walking, scurried to a distance.

"But then," said Pierrot relentingly, "suppose that by some awful perversity, by some gigantic vacuity in your experience, by some conspiracy of chance, you had never heard the Seventh Symphony. I tell you about it, say it is amazingly beautiful. You say, 'Prove it.'"

Pierrot felt the wind about his eyes, glanced at Columbine, amused himself for a moment thinking that she thought the swirling scarf a very handsome motion and quite becoming to Columbine. Then he went on, "I begin to describe it to you. I put what words I know end to end so as to make a very long sentence. I select adjectives, place them here and there before what nouns I think congenial to them. I raise my hands. I exclaim. Then, getting sober, I think carefully and arrange a syllogism. I leave the syllogism there for you to pick apart and go again to wander in adjectives and in exclamations."

"Well," said the man.

"Well?" said Pierrot. "Anything but well. Do you think I can pour the ocean into a tin cup so you can drink it? Do you think I can raise you to the mountain's summit with a sequence of adjectives?"

"Then," said the man, "there is nothing to be done about it. I must go on as you leave me, in doubt when you tell me doubt is not a necessity. You are a slight assistance."

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Pierrot turned his eyes to the wind which blew sweepingly across the plain. He thought the still landscape would be nearer perrection, if there were not human beings walking in it.

Columbine said, "You might hear the Symphony."

Columbine smiled, futilely pushed a strand of hair beneath her hat, knotted her scarf, smiled. To her Pierrot said, "I have heard, my dear, that men have at times achieved some degree of ascension by experiencing painfully a sudden application of jolt."

EXPERIMENTS AND PASSIONS

By ANDRÉ MAUROIS

AT THE moment nearly every country in the civilized world is suffering from the same malady. They are undergoing an industrial and an agricultural crisis; many of their workers are unemployed; their budgets will not balance. Such misfortunes are certainly not new, but never has a depression been so long or so painful. That is why economists and politicians have rushed to the fore to offer their panaceas. Economists are admirable men who reason to perfection; for my part I have never succeeded in listening to them for five minutes without their convincing me immediately. The trouble is that their theories which seem to be so learned and so true are also profoundly contradictory.

"Indeed, my friend," the first tells us, "you are drowning in a glass of water. It is all so simple. Analyze your illness. What are you suffering from? Overproduction, and it is easy to understand why. Scientific inventions, the progress of the machine, have enabled you to produce the same number of objects as before in less time and with fewer men. The result is obvious: if you continue to work the same number of hours you will produce too much. The remedy is simple: reduce the working day by a few hours." That was the reasoning of President Roosevelt and the Brain Trust.

"The difficulty," replies another group of American economists, "is that this fine reasoning is based on inexact assumptions. It is not true that we produce too many goods. Countless families are deprived of thousands of things that they badly want. Do you believe that all children have enough shoes, that all women are warmly clad and that everyone who wants a comfortable home possesses one? Obviously not. Consumer's goods are the only real wealth of men. Therefore it is not by cutting down production that you will increase well-being and happiness but on the contrary by augmenting it. Is this possible? Of course. Statistics show that in 1929 (the year of greatest prosperity in the United States) the factories were still far from working at capacity and the country could easily have stepped up its production by one-quarter. What is lacking then? Purchasing power. The remedy should be, not as you make it, to curtail the hours of work, but to increase the purchasing power of the masses."

"We thought of that before you did," reply the Rooseveltian group with an air of triumph. "Higher wages are the very means by which we seek to increase that power."

"And you are mistaken," interrupt the anti-Rooseveltians. "You are sadly mistaken—first, because the raising of wages entails, whether you wish it or not, a rise in prices that will nullify its effect; second, because that increase (in the United States) applies to but 40 percent of the workers; not included are the proprietors of small businesses, village artizans, those of the liberal professions, or the millions of citizens whose purchasing power will on the contrary be curtailed by a rise in prices."

"Part of that rise," says the Rooseveltian, "can be absorbed by stockholders and owners of business enterprises."

"Since the depression many enterprises no longer make any profits, and besides statistics prove that if you divided equally all the profits in the best years, small incomes would be scarcely affected at all."

"It's easy to criticize," says the Rooseveltian irritably, "but what is your solution of the problem?"

"We would follow a course quite contrary to yours. By increased production we would lower prices, and lower prices in turn would increase consumption."

"We shall do that too, but first we must prime the pump. And surely you must realize that business never picks up during a period of deflation."

"You haven't really primed anything."

This dialogue is endless. What does it prove? That these problems are so complicated that they are beyond the reach of human intelligence. They will be resolved by the passage of time, by long, sad experience and not by abstract reasoning. Look back over the history of the prophecies of economists and learn from their mistakes. Toward the middle of the nineteenth century the English free traders abolished the duty on cereals. "You are going to ruin the farmers," cried the protectionists. But from 1850 to 1875 farmers and industrialists experienced a prosperity hitherto unknown. Triumphant, the free traders believed that they had found the true economic religion. Laissez-faire became an unassailable dogma. But other countries were formed and built up; the United States and Germany began to compete with England; the war led to autarchy and in 1931 England, despite her belief in free trade, was forced to adopt protectionism for self-preservation.

"Heresy," cry the liberal economists. "Necessity," reply the national economists. "Another cycle," murmurs the philosophic man.

For the philosophic man knows that in human affairs there is no perfect system. "What is the best constitution?" Solon was asked. "For what people and at what period?" he countered. His answer applies to economics as well as to politics. Neither liberalism nor collectivism are doctrines absolutely true for every time and place. Although certain data of the problem (the characteristics of human nature) are almost constant, others change so completely that a certan solution, valuable today, tomorrow will no longer be practical.

"We should consider this question chemically," said old Lord Salisbury to his children. An excellent formula.

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As long as we use more passion than a spirit of experimentation to solve these problems, we shall bring about nothing but misery, disorder, bloodshed. Where would the science of physics be if the disciples of Newton were hurling insults at Einstein or if meetings had been organized to protest against the new theory of the constitution of the atom?

But is it possible to consider chemically ideas that bear so closely upon our goods, our personal life and our future? In the present state of the human mind it appears impossible. We should remember, though, that there was a time when men studied natural phenomena with the same passions. Today they are looking for a scapegoat to sacrifice in an economic depression where formerly it was in times of drought or storms. Cattle diseases were blamed on sorcery not microbes. After long centuries a little more wisdom has penetrated to the domains of physics and biology.

Auguste Comte taught that every science passes through three stages: magic, metaphysical and positive. For some sociology is in the magic stage, for others in the metaphysical. There is no land where the desciplines of science are not accepted by statesmen. The very citizen that is well-educated, who would blush to express an opinion on the atmospheric pressure without having consulted a barometer, will have opinions on Ethiopia without having studied geography or on currency without noting world prices.

But these follies do not last forever. We stand only at the beginning of the history of men, and these strange animals will perhaps one day be less unfortunate and less foolish than we see them today.

Light

Who shall declare the light?
  Who hath seen starkly
What is vouchsafed to all
  Through a glass darkly?

Glimpsed in a deep field
  Delicately wading,
Now sleek ripples
  Of the deep sea braiding,
Winnowing the barley's
  Pale green billows,
Shaking the silver
  From the somber willows,
Secret as a melody,
  Withdrawn, elusive,
Evermore mocking
  At the sense intrusive;
Evermore whispering,
  "However clear, it
Is but the shadow of
  The light of the Spirit—
Saint, as sinner,
  Were stricken sightless,
Had he looked on the Holiest
  Walking in whiteness!"

ANNE YOUNG.

Communications

THE RIDDLE OF ECONOMICS

Bakersfield, Calif.

TO the Editor: Noting your great interest in the economic problem, I send you some thoughts that I have not encountered before. It seems to me that the riddle of economics must be solved before we can make real progress in the elimination of industrial strife, bloody revolution and war. Therefore, I believe that every possible effort should be directed toward that end and every idea carefully considered, no matter how radical it may appear at first glance. The ideas that I am about to express will seem radical until carefully analyzed. When understood, however, I believe that they will prove to be only the same rules of sound business applied to the economic system as a whole that we now try to apply to individual business.

For some years, I have believed that some serious fallacy must exist in our general business methods. Human inequalities, selfishness and injustice do not adequately explain the paradox of the coexistence of huge surpluses and dire need. Human selfishness does not entirely justify the surpluses as the owners of them really wish to sell them.

The fundamental error in our economy, I believe to be this: that we accumulate portions of the medium of exchange. I believe that it can be proven that in order to do so, total production must be sold at a yearly price that exceeds the yearly income of the mass consumer and that the policy makes it a mathematical impossibility for all production to be absorbed.

Assuming that it is true that production is sold to consumers at a price in excess of the income of the consumers, our economy as a whole must be out of balance and as unsound as an individual business that attempted to follow the same policy. Eventual bankruptcy would be inevitable.

If we go back to absolute fundamentals, we will find that the only real income, in terms of the medium of exchange, is that issued in payment for human effort, that the total cost of all production is exactly equal to the total amount paid for such human effort and that the total income of consumers is exactly equal to the total cost of production. In order to extract a surplus of the medium of exchange for accumulation then, it is necessary to sell the product at a price in excess of the cost of production, which is at the same time a price in excess of the income of the consumers. We then have a condition that must lead toward bankruptcy. Any attempt to get around the basic fact of the unbalanced economy by involved devices of credit and currency is futile. The fact that portions of the medium of exchange are accumulated is positive proof of the unbalance no matter how we may try to get around it.

Furthermore, in any system of economics, the total medium of exchange must always be exactly equal in value to the total wealth, no matter whether the currency be expanded or contracted. The totals must balance.

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The total medium of exchange is required in order to purchase the total real wealth. Therefore, if the mass consumer does not have the use of all of the medium of exchange, it is a mathematical impossibility to dispose of all of the real wealth. Even though the financial structure may be said to be sound due to the fact that the medium of exchange is backed by real wealth, our mistaken method of its use throws the system as a whole out of balance and eventually must adversely affect the medium of exchange because of unpredictable reverberations during the inevitable period of readjustment.

Particularly in our industrial order of mass production, it is essential that we have a very large number of individual consumers. To place great purchasing power in the hands of comparatively few and little or none in the hands of the many, is the exact opposite of the policy that is an absolute necessity in order for our particular economic system to function with any degree of efficiency. One man with $1,000,000 cannot possibly consume as much production as 1,000,000 men, each with $1.

As portions of the medium of exchange are accumulated and concentrated in the hands of comparatively few, the many must of necessity have the use of a lower proportion of the whole. Since it is the buying of the many that determines the extent of consumption, there must be a diminishing purchasing power among the many in relation to the amount of the medium of exchange that is being accumulated. Diminishing consumption must lead to some unemployment which in turn causes a further curtailment of consumption, and the vicious circle of increasing unemployment and diminishing consumption is formed that can only end either with complete collapse or with redistribution of the medium of exchange. If the redistribution is incomplete we start toward the next depression under a handicap, and if it is complete those who had accumulated a large portion of the symbol of wealth under the impression that they were following sound business practise, are ruined.

At all times, it is necessary to redistribute the medium of exchange to some extent through private charity and public relief in order for our economic system to operate at all. The system is too far off balance however for these efforts to be entirely effective. We slowly but surely approach collapse until the point is reached at which a drastic and general readjustment is imperative.

It appears then, that while it seems a sound practise for individuals and individual units of business and industry to gather accumulations of the medium of exchange as insurance against a rainy day, the practise is an economic absurdity as applied to the economic structure as a whole and instead of being insurance against a rainy day is actually insurance of that rainy day.

The accumulation of surpluses of real wealth is desirable and necessary and the ownership of real wealth may continue to rest in the hands of the competent, responsible and energetic. The accumulation of the medium of exchange must obviously lead to disaster. It is no longer possible to revert to direct exchange of commodities and services. We are irrevocably committed to the use of a symbol. That symbol must be available for use in its entirety in order for adequate exchange to be possible. If a method can be developed that will insure the use of all of the medium of exchange in the purchase of real wealth, there should be an almost unlimited consumption and therefore an equally unlimited demand for labor and services in all forms. There is actually no such thing as a lack of demand for commodities: there is only an absurd maladjustment that prevents us from producing real wealth for our own consumption.

Granting that only a small part of the medium of exchange is extracted in relation to the total volume of business done, the practise is still unsound and such an unbalancing of the budget would not be tolerated for one minute in an individual business. It probably is only necessary for a slight maladjustment in our intricate business structure to start that vicious circle that slowly but surely tightens its grip until all business is nearly strangled to death.

A. C. Sanders.

THE SEARCH FOR PEACE

New York, N. Y.

To the Editor: In your leading article in the October 22 issue, "The Search for Peace," you conclude with a plea to rid the world from the fear of poverty and poverty's by-product—war. How this is to be done you do not state.

The great engima of our times is: why, in spite of tremendous increase in productive power, wages tend to a minimum, and why, in spite of the greatest accumulation of wealth the world has ever seen, millions of men are doomed to be unemployed—to have no wherewith to life.

A great economist and a very religious man put it thus: "Near the window by which I write, a great bull is tethered by a ring in his nose. Grazing round and round he has wound the rope about the stake until now he stands a close prisoner, tantalized by rich grass he cannot reach. . . . In all lands, men whose toil creates abounding wealth are pinched with poverty, and, while advancing civilization opens wider vistas and awakens new desires, are held down to brutish levels by animal needs. Bitterly conscious of injustice, feeling in their inmost souls that they were made for more than so narrow a life, they, too, spasmodically struggle and cry out."

The popular answer to this enigma of our times is collectivism. What is the foundation stone of collectivism? Is it not the theory of "surplus value"? And who popularized the theory of surplus value? The answer is Karl Marx. And from whence did Karl Marx get it? The answer is from the current economists of his day.

On what economic theory is "surplus value" founded? The answer is, the "wages fund" theory, the theory that wages come out of capital. Thus in an address to workingmen, after "Capital" had been published, entitled, "Value, Price and Profit," Karl Marx said: "A general rise in the rate of wages would result in a fall of the general rate of profit, but, broadly speaking, not affect the price of commodities." Translated into every-day affairs of 1937, even down to the claims of the C. I. O., this means that the reason wages are low (and hence poverty)

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is because employers of labor are greedy, therefore men must organize into a C. I. O. and politically into a "new deal" or a "labor party," to force employers to pay higher wages. If wages come out of capital, there is just claim for this theory of "surplus value."

However, in answer to this, in 1879, at San Francisco, an economist and social science philosopher by the name of Henry George wrote a book entitled, "Progress and Poverty," which to many thoughtful persons throughout the world demolished forever the "wages fund" theory. His subsequent books, "Social Problems," "Protection or Free Trade" and "The Science of Political Economy," added to his first book a clear concept, of how poverty and war might be abolished from the face of the earth.

Unlike some leaders of today, who have popular favor and who array class against class, in their economic ignorance, Henry George visioned a society "where talent shall be greater than wealth and character greater than talent, and where each may find free scope to develop body, mind and soul." Henry George saw clearly that a society is possible where none may want and all have the full product of their toil—with liberty and justice to all.

Therefore to those who want a better society and who abhor collectivism and all that it stands for, I would say: study the books of Henry George and learn how to disprove collectivism.

H. Ellenoff.

WHERE ARE OUR CRITICS?

Scranton, Pa.

TO the Editor: Congratulations to John Brunini for his essay on the state of contemporary Catholic criticism. The library profession has long felt the need of a competent book-reviewing periodical to cover the popular and scientific literature in all subjects. In particular the writer has the following objections to the book-reviewing columns of our Catholic periodicals:

(1) They do not cover non-Catholic literature adequately, as Mr. Brunini notes.

(2) The reviews of many books appear too late to be of value, e.g., many Catholic college libraries maintain Rental Shelves for which the popular best sellers must be secured almost on publication date. If the book-reviewing editor followed the trade publications, such as *Publishers' Weekly,* he could pick most of these best sellers in advance by the amount of advertising received. While Commonweal often reviews near publication date, e.g., the review of La Farge's "The Enemy Gods" in the October 29 issue, there does not seem to be a consistent policy in this respect. We librarians are also deeply interested in books other than the best-selling type and cannot wait two or three years for an evaluation. Yet some of our monthlies and quarterlies contain the review when our library copy is almost worn out.

(3) Reviewers should pay more attention to format, particularly of Catholic books which are often substandard. Did any reviewer note that Belloc's "The Restoration of Property" and "The Crisis of Civilization" had no tables of contents, chapter headings or indexes (not to mention bibliographies which Mr. Belloc habitually omits) without which these books lost three-fourths of their permanent value to persons who must consult them frequently?

(4) There should be some statement of the style of writing, whether scientific or popular, for high school, college or general adult reading, etc.

(5) An attempt should be made to place the book with relation to previous publications on the same subject.

In conclusion the writer suggests that The Commonweal assume the burden by issuing a monthly literary supplement, at an additional charge of course. Perhaps the monthly supplement could reprint the reviews from the weekly issues and add more reviews of less popular books than are now given, plus occasional reviews of good Catholic books in foreign languages and articles on contemporary authors and literary trends. Here's one vote and two subscriptions for a *Catholic Literary Review.*

Eugene P. Willging, *Librarian,*
St. Thomas College, Scranton, Pa.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

Yonkers, N. Y.

TO the Editor: My attention has been called to a review of William Teeling's book, "Pope Pius XI and World Affairs," in the October 29 edition of your magazine. It states that the Cardinal Hayes Literature Committee has approved of this book. It is quite true that since the book appeared with the other approved books in one of our newspapers the reviewer thought he was correct in his statement and no fault is found with him. For the sake of the record and for any inquiries that may come in I present the facts.

This book was not listed in the New York *Sun,* the New York *Herald Tribune* and in the "Book Survey," which is the only official organ of the Committee, for the simple reason that it was rejected by us. The explanation for the confusion on the matter is that it did appear on a tentative list sent to me and was not stricken out in one of the copies sent the press. There is no need of any further apology for clerical errors, as you are in the publishing business and know that such things happen.

With every good wish and prayer for the success of The Commonweal,

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Arthur J. Scanlan.

OLD MASTERS IN A NEW SETTING

West Medway, Mass.

TO the Editor: I was extremely interested in Evelyn Miller Crowell's article in The Commonweal of October 8. It is informative, interesting and accurate—except for one detail.

The story related in her article was told to me by my brother, the director of the Museum of Fine Arts in Dallas, Texas, some months ago. She refers to him as "Richard Howard Foster," and twice more as "Mr. Foster." He probably doesn't mind, but I do! Would it be possible for you to correct it to Richard Foster Howard?

Donal McGaw Howard.

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Seven Days' Survey

The Church.—Pope Pius XI has returned to the Vatican from his summer home at Castelgandolfo. * * * From now until Christmas Reverend James M. Gillis will deliver a series of broadcasts over the Catholic Hour on "Saints vs. Kings," every Sunday at 6 p.m., Eastern Standard Time. * * * A N.C.W.C. survey discloses that at least 556 American citizens are laboring as Catholic missionaries in China, more than one-fifth of them Maryknoll Fathers. Father Peter Willems, Dutch diocesan priest, and the five Marist Brothers of French, German, Hungarian, Spanish and Czechoslovakian extraction, kidnaped by bandits near Peiping, are still held captive. * * * Several prominent priests and laymen in the Sarre territory have been arrested by the German government for distributing privately copies of the recent papal encyclical on the Church in Germany and recent pastorals of the German bishops. * * * The Mexican colony of the little town of Deerfield, Kan., recently witnessed the dedication of a mission chapel made of two railway cars set on parallel tracks on a plot of ground given for the purpose. When the two inner walls were knocked out and the two cars connected by flooring and a roof, a chapel comfortably accommodating 150 persons was the result. The cars were donated by the Santa Fe and the only cost was $700. * * * The Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore has been made a Minor Basilica by Pope Pius XI. * * * Sir Edward Denham, Governor General of Jamaica, B. W. I., has expressed deep regret over the loss by fire of the historic convent of the Sisters of St. Francis at Kingston and a committee has been formed under his patronage to raise funds for its restoration. * * * Through a special grant secured from Cardinal Hayes, Archbishop of New York, public devotion to Blessed Martin de Porres, Negro Dominican lay Brother, was inaugurated at St. Mark's Church, Harlem.

The Nation.—On October 27, the Federal Reserve Board announced a reduction in margin requirements for purposes of purchasing or carrying securities. At the same time margin requirements were instituted for short sales, the figure set being 50 percent. The market went up on this news, but was cooled later by an interview wherein the President refused to commit himself to absolute statements on budget balancing and lowering capital gains and undistributed profits taxes. * * * The army has worked out a new recruitment program to take effect in case of war. Semi-military recruiting committees will function in every state to obtain 500,000 volunteers during the first sixty days of war, during which time the selective draft system would get into operation. The new arrangement would expand the army and National Guard from its peace-time strength of 375,000 to 1,500,000 during the first four months of hostilities. * * * The railroads petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission for a 15 percent rise in general freight rates together with an increase in passenger fares, designed to yield an additional $508,000,000 annually. * * * The value of United States exports during September amounted to $296,729,000, 7 percent higher than in August and 35 percent above September, 1936. Imports were valued at $233,361,000, 5 percent under the August total, and 8 percent above a year ago. Increased cotton and tobacco exports were the main factors in the change. * * * The Women's Bureau in Washington has just issued a pamphlet, "Women in the Economy of the United States of America," the most comprehensive work so far published covering the field. Women are found in their greatest numbers in five occupational groups: domestic and personal service, clerical occupations, manufacturing and mechanical industries, and trade and professional service. Only in domestic service do they outnumber men, more than 3,000,000 being employed in that work, but they just about equal men in clerical work. Their wage levels are universally below those of men.

The Wide World.—The London non-intervention committee of nine powers agreed to ask both sides in Spain to approve the British plan for the gradual withdrawal of volunteers as a first step to enable two missions to be sent to that country. Britain ordered the huge battle cruiser Hood to Majorca to prevent a reported Italian threat to dominate the whole Balearic groups of islands. France stationed a warship in the vicinity of Minorca. Following a report by a special legal commission, approximately 4,000 Basque children in England will be returned to Spain as promptly as possible. Little activity was reported on the Spanish battlefronts. It is believed that Nationalist warships will establish a blockade of the Eastern Spanish coast from Almeria to the French frontier. * * * Germany is creating a fourteenth army corps of 45,000 men. * * * Czechoslovakia celebrated the nineteenth anniversary of its foundation. Premier Hodza declared that the government would continue to develop its policy of justice to minorities and strongly condemned Germany's recent attack on that policy. * * * A state of war was declared in Asuncion, Paraguayan capital, following an army revolt. * * * French troops established military control in Morocco's chief cities to forestall an alleged nationalist plot to overthrow the French protectorate and establish an independent Arab kingdom. * * * Piqued by the failure of the French government to send an Ambassador to Rome with credentials that would imply a recognition of the conquest of Ethiopia, the Italian government ordered its Ambassador to leave Paris. * * * On the eve of the Brussels nine-power conference, Foreign Secretary Eden told the House of Commons that "any action, whatever the character is, that can be taken in this Far Eastern dispute does depend essentially upon cooperation by the United States."

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Colonies.—In an address commemorating the fifteenth anniversary of the march on Rome, Mussolini asserted that peace could not be lasting and fruitful unless Bolshevism was eliminated from Europe and particularly from Spain, certain unjust and absurd clauses in the Versailles Treaty were revised, Germany be allowed to again gain possession of her African colonial empire and Italy be left in peace to develop and exploit her newly acquired Ethiopian territory. A few days later Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, sharply criticized Mussolini for his remark about the colonial situation. "I must now declare plainly," he told the House of Commons, "that we do not admit the right of any government to call upon us for a contribution when there is no evidence to show that that government is prepared to make any contribution on its own behalf." At the close of the World War, Britain received 820,000 square miles of German colonial possessions as mandates, Italy about 20,000 square miles. Italian officials denied that Mussolini had championed Germany's demand for colonies and pointed out that he had merely stated that the colonial question was one problem that must be solved before peace is secured. It is rumored that the Reichstag will soon be called to ratify some decision of Chancellor Hitler regarding the restoration of at least some of the Reich's pre-war colonies.

China.—Military action of the week centered around Shanghai, especially at Soochow Creek. Fighting in the Nantoa section led to several foreign casualties in the International Settlement. After holding out in a Chapei warehouse for several days, a Chinese "suicide battalion" on orders from General Chiang made a spectacular escape to the International Settlement where they were disarmed and interned. Civilians in the Lungwha district were urged by the Chinese authorities to flee to safer ground. Finally it was proposed that a large part of the Shanghai area bordering on the French Concession and the International Settlement should be demilitarized. The meager reports that trickled in from the North indicated that the Japanese were making slow headway. The question of German military advisors came up during the negotiations for the German-Japanese anti-Communist pact. When the Germans asserted that if they resigned their posts with the Nanking forces they would be replaced by British or Russian officers, the subject was dropped immediately. A late report told of the formation of another Chinese ex-Communist army organized to join the defenders in Shansi. Foreign military observers of the battle of Shanghai commend the Chinese for their valor. They also speak well of the Japanese troops, whose immeasurably superior equipment is the margin of success. Chinese morale around Shanghai is still holding up well.

Beyond the Rio Grande.—There is considerable evidence that Mexico is threatened by a severe financial crisis brought on by her land distribution program and the construction of dams and highways. President Cardenas has made an address emphatically denying such a crisis and the General Accounting Office is valiantly publishing charts and statistics in order to disprove the charge, but the rumor continues to be bruited about Mexican shops, restaurants and offices. Although compensation is not involved, the setting up of an *ejido,* or communal farm, is rather costly. The government supplies the peons with implements, seed, fertilizer; it supervises the organization of the communal farm and arranges for the necessary long-term credit. All this requires loans from the Bank of Mexico. The Governor of Sonora has finally given way and made an agreement with President Cardenas that the estates in the rich Yaqui Valley, a number of them owned by Americans like Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney and the heirs of John Hays Hammond, are next. In the distant future reclaimed lands may be given in compensation for these acres intensely cultivated for wheat, cotton and rice. When a federal judge refused to hear the first case challenging the constitutionality of these impending seizures, it appeared that redress was unobtainable through the Mexican courts. In this connection a treaty is in force with the United States whereby there may be no land seizures by the Mexican government without immediate compensation. Under Cardenas the terms of Supreme Court justices were modified from life to six years, to coincide with the term of the administration.

Housing.—With a Federal Housing administrator finally appointed, building under the Wagner-Steagall Act is expected to get started soon. The PWA is winding up its $135,000,000 housing construction program, and meetings are being held to inaugurate the work under the Housing Authority. The authority will have $500,000,000 to lend during the next three years, and will have $25,000,000 to give annually as subsidies to make up the difference between an "economic rent" and what the tenants can afford. PWA rents range around $11 a room in large cities, while Housing Authority rents must be near $7 a room. The subsidies will make up for part of the difference. PWA experience will permit reductions. All new building must be done through local authorities so that much of the actual work will be paid for by local government departments. Slum clearance must accompany new construction, but Mr. Nathan Straus, the new administrator, stressed the fact that new building need by no means go up where the slums come down. He claimed there will be no competition with private business. "Conservatively speaking, we need to build 900,000 new dwelling units in this country every year. Actually we built 57,000 in 1935, 250,000 in 1936, probably 400,000 to 420,000 this year. Nothing the United States Housing Authority can do will catch up with that shortage." He pointed out that in Great Britain 3,300,000 dwelling units have been built since 1919; 1,300,000 with some public assistance, the remainder by unaided private enterprise. * * * Figures published by the FHA show that $1,000,000,000 worth of insured mortgages have been issued during the past three years. Losses under the insurance system have been $10,000, while the insurance fund available equals $20,000,000. Including mortgages selected for appraisal, large-scale rental projects approved, and modernization and repair notes insured, the gross business of FHA is nearing $2,000,000,000.

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Labor.—Labor met varying success on election day. In New York the American Labor party, formed two years ago by union leaders as an expression of Labor's Non-partizan League, advanced strongly. The party gave Roosevelt 238,000 votes in 1936; it polled about 482,000 for La Guardia. The Republican party gave the Mayor 672,823. The non-partizan elections in Detroit for mayor and councilmen scarcely veiled the political contest between the liberal Democratic-C.I.O. forces on one side and the Republicans on the other. After a bitter campaign the Republican won the mayorality, the opposition being much more straight labor than in New York. The C.I.O. candidates for the council also lost. In Akron, Ohio, where troubles in the rubber industry have brought perhaps the sharpest cleavage in the population on class lines in the country, the Republican candidate for mayor defeated the Democratic-C.I.O. candidate by a small margin according to early returns. In Canton, where the "little steel" war waxed strong, the Republican apparently defeated the Democratic-C.I.O. candidate with more ease.. * * * Organization drives under the C.I.O. were continuing, not waiting upon the outcome of negotiations with the A. F. of L. The automobile workers, picketing the Fisher body plant in Flint in an attempt to make it the first 100-percent union automobile factory, were approaching nearer a final contest with Ford. John L. Lewis announced the commencement of a drive to enroll all workers in the furniture, bedding and allied trades into an industrial organization, in the face of the fact that the A. F. of L. has some of the men in trades within that industry. The drive among the 1,000,000 oil workers was said to be progressing slowly, 40,000 having so far been signed up. Sidney Hillman's drive in textiles was proceeding quietly.

Propaganda.—The Institute for Propaganda Analysis, Inc., "a non-profit corporation organized for scientific research in methods used by propagandists in influencing public opinion," recently formed in New York by liberals with a board headed by Charles A. Beard, issued its second monthly letter under the title of "How to Detect Propaganda." Seven propaganda devices are listed. "In all these devices our emotion is the stuff with which the propagandists work. Without it they are helpless, with it, harnessing it to their purposes, they can make us glow with pride or burn with hatred, they can make us zealots in behalf of the program they espouse." The first, the "name-calling device, . . . appeals to our hate and fear by giving 'bad names' to those individuals, groups, nations, races, policies, practises, beliefs and ideals which he would have us condemn and reject. . . . Today's bad names include: Fascist, demagogue, dictator, Red, financial oligarchy, Communist, muck-raker, alien, outside agitator, economic royalist, utopian, rabble-rouser, trouble-maker, Tory, Constitution wrecker." "Glittering generalities" is called "a device by which the propagandist identifies his program with virtue by use of 'virtue words,'" such as: truth, freedom, honor, liberty, social justice, public service, the right to work, loyalty, progress, democracy, the American way, Constitution defender. The "transfer device" is one "by which the propagandist carries over the authority, sanction and prestige of something we respect and revere to something he would have us accept." The "plain folks" device, almost self-explanatory, is "used by politicians, labor leaders, business men and even by ministers and educators." By the "card-stacking device," he "makes the unreal appear real and the real appear unreal . . . he lets half-truth masquerade as truth . . . a mediocre candidate, through the 'build up' is made to appear an intellectual titan." Techniques for the "band wagon device" range "from those of medicine show to dramatic spectacle." The "testimonial device" is closely related.

Farms.—Reversing the policy enunciated recently in connection with plans for balancing the budget—that the RFC should stop making loans—the President arranged for $85,000,000 in loans to farmers to enable them to hold their corn. The Commodity Credit Corporation will furnish the money out of funds to be obtained from a RFC loan. Only farmers who participated in the 1937 soil conservation program are eligible. Meanwhile the House Agricultural Committee was very busy trying to prepare farm legislation for the coming session of Congress. All farm plans apparently had strong advocates. Chief issue was whether production and marketing control should be compulsory or voluntary. It appeared probable that different commodities would be dealt with in different fashions. AAA officers were advocating an allotment plan with penalty taxes very similar to the one overruled by the Supreme Court. The interlocking of farm problems with other public policies was brought out in several strong speeches during the week. Secretary Hull stoutly defended the reciprocal tariff program as an aid to agriculture. "Opponents of the program, whether intentionally or otherwise, are in effect advocating the perpetuation of a long-standing policy of tariff discrimination against the farmer." Senator Borah claimed that anti-monopoly law enforcement would be the greatest service to farmers. The president of the National Co-operative Milk Producers' Federation attacked the idea of a wages and hours law and the Hull tariff program as both harming agriculture. In New York State, farmers were exerting more direct action through the Dairy Farmers Union, conducting a milk strike in nineteen counties. The union's demands upon milk plants are approximately these: recognition of the union as sole bargaining agency; payment of the union's prices; purchase from union members only; agreement not to furnish milk to any other dairy declared unfair or against which the strike is pending; agreement by dealers to provisions which will stop unfair trade practises and price cutting in New York City, "which have brought the dairy industry to its present ruinous state."

Non-Catholic Religious Activities.—Dr. Mildred Helen McAfee, president of Wellesley College, told more than 1,000 delegates at the annual meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the sixtieth New England regional meeting of the Congregational and Christian Churches at Concord, N. H., churches should come to take more interest in the opinions

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and reactions of youth. Dr. McAfee termed the enthusiasm of youth for social causes an expression of social interest of value to society. "External and internal conditions have kept the present-day student from thinking of himself as capable of offering many helpful solutions to the rest of the world about other persons' problems. Even in the field of religion he has come to think of his convictions as more or less tentative. He often hesitates to be the spokesman of his convictions lest they may change suddenly," Dr. McAfee declared. She also deplored the humility of most college youth who hesitate to express themselves on world affairs because they do not feel capable of coping with problems facing the world today. * * * The prediction was made at Boston, October 26, by State Senator Thomas M. Burke that the Industrial Defense Association, Inc., notorious Jew-baiting organization, would be outlawed by the State Legislature at its next session. The statement followed a day of startling testimony before the state commission appointed by the state legislature last year to investigate subversive activities in Massachusetts. Last week considerable time was spent hearing Communist leaders speak in their own defense. The commission is headed by a woman, Senator Sybil Holmes. * * * A new campaign for "British leadership in constructive action to stop war" has been launched by the British National Peace council, a federation coordinating the efforts of the British peace societies. The president is the Bishop of Birmingham, and the vice-presidents include the Chief Rabbi and leaders of the Free Churches. The campaign is based upon a charter of Peace and Social Justice arising out of the National Peace Congress held this year. Support for the campaign is to be organized in every parliamentary constituency in Great Britain.

N. C. A. F.—The eighth biennial convention of the National Catholic Alumni Federation in Boston adopted a resolution commending the Nationalist cause in Spain and placed the organization in support of "the Spanish hierarchy in its condemnation of the minority that has outraged the Christian spirit of the Spanish people." Another resolution pledged spiritual and material aid to those priests and religious devoting their lives to the welfare of the Negro and otherwise to help the Negro race in this country. More than 5,000 persons visited the anti-God exhibit of blasphemous posters, cartoons, books and pamphlets, and similar material from Communist, atheist and other subversive sources which was shown in convention and which will soon be exhibited in New York's Centre Club and in other cities. Following Cardinal O'Connell's address of welcome, the Reverend Wilfred Parsons, S. J., asserted that misunderstandings between the employer and employee are a serious threat to democracy within. "It is the right of equality that drives the employer; it is the fact of inequality which lures the employee. In this struggle lies the first problem that confronts democracy from within: the problem of reconciling this inequality of fact with the equality of justice, of the natural law. Communism can come of too much insistence on social reform. Fascism can come of too much resistance of social reform. If democracy cannot cope with this problem, if it does not even recognize that there is a problem, sooner or later it will abdicate in favor of Fascist or Communist collectivism."

Social Security.—Various states throughout the nation are tackling problems devolving on social security. Governor Horner of Illinois has ordered the rejection of three-quarters of the names submitted by local officials to be county pension directors on the grounds that they were nominees of partizan politics. In Maine, where no pensions to the aged have been paid since August, the legislature is in special session seeking a fund of $4,300,000. Investigations in 5 of the 116 counties of the state of Missouri indicate that a high percentage of the state's pensioners should not be receiving this aid. An investigation is threatened in Oklahoma, where 60 percent of the population over sixty-five are on the pension rolls, three times the percentage for the nation as a whole. Tennessee and Wisconsin also have special legislative sessions seeking to iron out deficiencies in their pension programs. Sales taxes, government economies and cutting ineligibles from pension lists are being debated as a means of overcoming state social security fund deficits in the Texas State Legislature. New York State's Unemployment Trust Fund has reached the sum of $73,163,174. The Social Security Board at Washington announced that 34,000,000 social security numbers, which include 4,000,000 applicants for old age benefits, have been issued throughout the nation. Of the $250,000,000 in federal pension grants to the states since February 1, the Board had assigned for the aged about 87 percent, for dependent children 10 percent, for the blind 3 percent.

Vitamin C.—Professor Albert von Szent-Gyorgyi, Hungarian medical research worker of Szeged University, Hungary, was awarded on October 28 the 1937 Nobel Prize for physiology and medicine. He was chosen for this award by the Stockholm higher faculty of medicine. The professor is Austrian born and has spent most of his life in laboratories in Austria, Germany, England and Hungary. He was lectured at Harvard University, and in 1930 spent several months in the United States under the auspices of the Mayo Clinic and the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation of New York. The scientist received a degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Cambridge University in 1918, and during the following twelve years worked in many laboratories in Europe. In 1930, he returned to Hungary and began his efforts to isolate and identify ascorbic acid, or vitamin C. To his wife he owes in part his discovery of ascorbic acid. When she served him with a dish too highly seasoned with paprika, rather than distress her by refusing to eat it, he took it into his laboratory on a plea that he was quite busy. There he tried an analysis of the paprika and from it he finally extracted ascorbic acid. After years of experiment with paprika plants from all parts of the world, his efforts succeeded with a plant grown in large quantities in his native land. This year Dr. Szent-Gyorgyi was invited to deliver the Abraham Flexner lecture at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn.

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The Play and Screen

Amphitryon 38

WHATEVER Alfred Lunt and Lynne Fontanne do is done with gusto, vitality and verve. They are two players unique in the American theatre. Even though you may not like the play they are certain to give a good show. They are two able thespians enamored of their art; in the best sense they are both stage-struck. In Jean Giraudoux's comedy, "Amphitryon 38," as adapted by S. N. Behrman, they play with all their old-time humor and resourcefulness: Mr. Lunt as Jupiter, Miss Fontanne as Alkmena, while their associates and, in particular, Richard Whorf as Mercury, George Meader as Sosie, Sydney Greenstreet as the Trumpeter, Barry Thompson as Aphyitryon and Alan Hewitt as the Warrior are excellent. Moreover, Lee Simonson has never designed more beautiful settings, and Bretaigne Windust under Mr. Lunt's and Miss Fontanne's supervision has directed the play admirably. The Theatre Guild has as far as acting and production goes put its best foot forward. What then of the play itself? M. Giraudoux is one of the wittiest dramatists now writing for the French stage, and Mr. Behrman is an admirable man to transfer the spirit of the original into English. The play deals of course with the old Greek legend of the love of Zeus for a mortal woman, and Mr. Giraudoux has set out to make the most of its erotic possibilities. The result, despite the wit of the dialogue, is that we have a play which can scarcely be commended for its moral tone or its good taste. It is in short a pagan treatment of a pagan subject. (At the Guild Theatre.)

As You Like It

THE SURRY PLAYERS under the sponsorship of Dwight Deere Wiman have given us a really delightful production of Shakespeare's "As You Like It." Staged by Samuel Rosen, with costumes by Lucinda Ballard and Scott Wilson, it sets out to give the fantasy rather than the reality of the play, and above all to give it life and color. Mr. Rosen's direction has invention, at times far-fetched, but on the whole he has been able to project the spirit of the comedy and to conceal some of the deficiencies of its construction. In this particular "As You Like It," with its stylized Forest of Arden, sweet indeed are the uses of adversity! But once we accept this convention, and in Shakespear's comedies conventions must be accepted, we have a very delightful evening, for the action moves swiftly, the players have youth and ardor, and best of all they know how to utter Shakespearean language.

First and foremost, as she ought to come, comes Rosalind. Katherine Emery has youth, coquetry, humor, variety and a very proper swagger. She is lovely to look at and charming to listen to. We can both believe in her and love her. The Orlando of Sheppard Strudwick is manly and graceful, and he knows how to read his lines. Frederick Tozere gives a beautifully composed and clearly thought-out portrait of Jacques, a Jacques rather of the court than the woods. Mr. Tozere is not only an actor of technical resource, but a striking personality as well. The Silvius of K. Edwin Shaw is rather too much in a low comedy vein, but the Phoebe of Connie Nickerson is quite in the right spirit, and the Audrey of Helen Wynn and the William of Alan Handley are two truly amusing country bumpkins. The Touchstone of Whitner Bissell is sprightly, if younger than Touchstone usually is, and other admirable performances are given by Hayden Rorke as Charles, and Staats Cotsworth as Oliver. Anne Revere has proved before that she is an excellent actress, but she is miscast as Celia. In short, in their production of "As You Like It," the Surry Players prove themselves a group of players to be reckoned with. (At the Ritz Theatre.)

GRENVILLE VERNON.

Conquest

THE CONQUEST is that of Napoleon over Countess Walewska, and for her surrender she won his aid in liberating her Poland from the czars.

No previous co-starring performer has so overshadowed the great Garbo as does Charles Boyer in this heavily laden historical romance. Not that Miss Garbo's Maria does not subordinate her own personality to a characterization that is most consistent and convincing. But Mr. Boyer's Napoleon is by far the more notable endeavor. "Conquest" was expertly dramatized by S. N. Behrman, Samuel Hoffenstein and Salka Viertel, from the novel by Waclaw Gasiorowski. It is presented with a Herbert Stothart musical score that strongly embellishes the many moods. These are introduced with the producer's statement that the story is one of "a historic love," and the assurance that the collaborators did not materially alter the actual facts.

"Conquest" has a regiment of famous acting names, a wealth of superior quality production technique and all of the pageantry of the period, but still successfully follows the intimate lines of an intimate love story, the lavish staging running secondary to the motivation. This in itself is remarkable because Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer poured their full technical powers and a reputed $3,000,000 into the making, along with some eighteen months of exploration, research and actual filming, besides the inclusion of ninety-one different sets. Yet the prevailing interest always is of behind-the-scenes romance in history.

The action turns Maria quickly from her great passion for the liberation of Poland from the Cossacks, to her ill-fated love for Napoleon, for whom she parted from her husband. Napoleon, divorced from Josephine, now is followed faithfully by the heart of Maria, through the lavish courts of war-torn Europe, through the bitter Napoleonic campaigns, always adroitly referred to, never actually refought, and on through his marriage to another, a Hapsburg princess, to his retreat from Moscow, thence to Elba, where Napoleon, deserted in defeat by the Hapsburg princess, again sees Maria and the boy-child of their love. Months at Elba bring him renewed determination to battle—and Waterloo. The happiness of Maria is sacrificed to his ambitions, ambitions which burned out as he departed for St. Helena and banishment.

JAMES P. CUNNINGHAM.

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Books

A Hollywood Theme

The Faithful Wife, by Sigrid Undset. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

SIGRID UNDSET has her own way of telling a tale. It is a simple fashion, robust yet austere, and it won all her readers when "Kristin Lavransdatter" was published eight years ago. She has retained this simplicity of style, but in her last novel, "The Faithful Wife," she has allowed herself no story to tell. Nothing at least that Americans, sated with Hollywood, can call a narrative. The faithful wife, Nathalie, has been married sixteen years when her husband breaks it to her without much concern that he prefers another and younger woman who is already his mistress. Nathalie promptly surrenders all claim to Sigurd, and takes a lover, a rather unpleasant person, in his stead. The young wife dies with her first baby, the middle-aged lovers weary of each other, and the long-divided couple, reinforced by a baby daughter and an adopted son, decide to try again.

It is uncommonly like Hollywood, and it must be like Norway, since Sigrid Undset tells us so. Even the children are spoiled out of their natural reasonableness. The outlook upon life is the same, and there is a note of uncertainty here and there which sounds strangely familiar.

"You must pass some sort of an examination," says Nathalie to her schoolgirl niece, "whatever you want to be."

"Who knows," replies Minda, "if anyone will ask us what we want to be when my time comes. If Norway is a Soviet republic by that time, I suppose most of us will be put to do things that others decide for us. Whichever way affairs turn out, most of the jobs are bound to be those that one wouldn't take if one could get anything else."

It is not a dazzling prospect for a girl of fourteen. And Nathalie's final reflection is concerned with Sigurd rather than with herself. "Perhaps he is at this moment thanking the Almighty—the Guardian of all fools. And that at any rate I can almost understand."

AGNES REPPLIER.

Telepathy

New Frontiers of the Mind: The Story of the Duke Experiments, by Professor J. B. Rhine. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

ONE OF the oldest formulas accepted generally by philosophers and psychologists runs: "Nothing gets to the intellect except through the senses." In spite of almost universal acceptance of this formula, now and then there comes the startling announcement in contradiction stating that telepathy, apart from the senses, either in the form of mind reading or thought transfer has been demonstrated. A generation ago when hypnotism was all the rage there was a wide persuasion that that state facilitated telepathy. There was, as it were, a sixth sense rendered active in the hypnotic state, but hynotism proved to be only induced hysteria, and hysteria, supersuggestibility.

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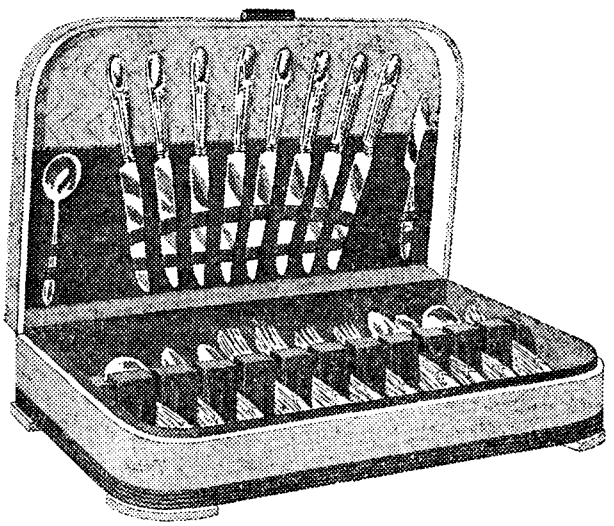

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Hypnotism itself went the way of other curious states of mind, the significance of which had been exaggerated.

We are in the midst of another of these announcements with regard to telepathy. Professor Rhine of Duke University, North Carolina, experimenting with cards has found that certain subjects, usually students or instructors, are capable of naming cards which they have not seen but have only thought about much oftener in the course of the experiment than would be justified by chance. He thinks his observations justify conclusions that point to telepathy. Half a dozen times before in the course of the last century, this has occurred, followed by disappointment. We shall have to wait for many further experiments before the latest claim can be accepted.

In the meantime mathematicians object to the way Professor Rhine draws his conclusions. Professor Kellogg of Magill University in the *Scientific Monthly* for October has an article in which he points out that Professor Rhine draws conclusions from selected portions of the evidence in a way that assumes the truth of the very theory he wishes to prove. He insists that the whole research is therefore quite inconclusive. Psychologists and mathematicians must work out this problem between them.

JAMES J. WALSH.

A Pleasant Person

The Rest of My Life, by Carolyn Wells. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. $2.75.

IF THE common definition of beauty as that which is not hard to look at, be correct, then it ought to follow that literature is that which is not hard to read. In this event Miss Wells has written what must be considered one of the great books of the world. But I fear there is some flaw in the syllogism. "The Rest of My Life" is a very entertaining account of a kindly, humorous and clever woman—one notably full of common sense and free from pretension—but it skims merely over the surface of things and as an account of her period or of the group to which she belongs, is a little disappointing.

I feel somewhat ungracious in saying this of so pleasant a person as Carolyn Wells appears to be, or of a book that made me chuckle so often at a quaint turn of phrase. Therefore I must in justice add that this is among the very few books I have come across that I could not lay down until I had finished it. Just as no family (whatever their views about alcohol) should be without brandy in the house in case of emergency, so no family (whatever their views about literature) should be without "The Rest of My Life," to be read when nothing else is readable.

With this admission made, perhaps I may be permitted to say that the school of wit to which Carolyn Wells belongs is already rather old-fashioned and was never anything but thin. Great wit is profound, and rightly did the eighteenth century regard it as almost equivalent to genius. But Miss Wells, like Gelett Burgess and Oliver Herford, is hardly more than an immensely fertile fabricator of quips, riddles and puzzles. In her make-up there is more quicksilver than steel. She herself says that her thirty detective stories were produced, comparatively late in her literary career, as a form of puzzle solution. In all she has published 170 books.

Her autobiography employs the engaging device of telling us what she proposes to do with the rest of her life rather than of what she has already done. As her doctor thinks that, in spite of her heart trouble, she is likely to live to be ninety, and as there is no doubt that she intends to continue as at present she may surpass the record for literary productiveness so far held, I believe, by Lope de Vega. I for one hope she does. She has given pleasure to thousands of readers, and is one of the most unassuming and likable people in existence. "I feel," she says, "that the rest of my life is going to be more entertaining and interesting even than the years the locust hath eaten, and goodness knows they were happy and pleasant."

JOHN KENNETH MERTON.

Transmutation

The Newer Alchemy, by Lord Rutherford. New York: The Macmillan Company. $1.50.

THIS was perhaps the last work of the great British physicist and noble laureate, Lord Rutherford of Nelson, whose recent death, in the words of Sir Joseph J. Thomson, "is one of the greatest losses ever to occur to British science." Published only a few months ago, "The Newer Alchemy" is an accurate, but lucid, plain and conservative account of what has been accomplished to date in the transmutation of chemical elements. Lord Rutherford might have capitalized on the dramatic value of his subject in the popular mind, have employed high-pressure phrases such as "smashing the atom," "releasing the atom's tremendous energy," "making synthetic gold—the alchemist's dream come true," etc., and have made sensational predictions about its future. But a true experimental physicist, whose scientific rule seemed to be to get the facts and the theories will take care of themselves, he chose to present these facts shorn of unwarranted claims and exaggerations.

"Almost all the elements have been shown to be capable of transformation by suitable agencies" (namely, bombardment by protons, neutrons, deutrons, etc.), Lord Rutherford states. Yet he does not believe that this indicates the possibility of cheap gold, because the transmutation of another element into gold demands the use of a more expensive source-material, platinum. Nor does he feel that the tremendous amount of energy stored in the atom may be released with sufficient efficiency to make the process commercially profitable or competitive with coal and the other common sources of energy.

Though a small volume, it contains sixty-seven concise pages of unadulterated and authoritative information on this new, vastly important and fascinating subject, by one whose own researches and those of his students and collaborators have contributed most to its development and advance. Definitely valuable to chemists and physicists, this volume should be well worth the attention of the general reader with some elementary training in physics, but hardly digestible for those with none.

ROBERT B. MORRISSEY.

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Papal Colors

A Reporter at the Papal Court, by Thomas B. Morgan. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. $3.00.

FOR THE greater part, Mr. Morgan has written a secular history of the greatest court in the world. He is not a Catholic and does not deal at any length with the spiritual aspects of the papacy. He is, however, sympathetic with the religious position of the Pope, and he recognizes the spiritual and symbolic background of the great secular position from which the Pope conducts the affairs of the Church. One chapter deals briefly with "Behind the Ceremonies" and, besides going into the problem of chairs and costumes, enters briefly into the world of liturgy. In general, nevertheless, it is rather the colorfulness which fills this readable volume. The mechanics of the Vatican State are explained and the behind-the-scenes aspects of running the tiny country and far-reaching departments, producing the elaborate ceremonials, getting the papal automobiles repaired. Mr. Morgan has successfully covered the Vatican from the time of the last illness of Pope Benedict XV up to the present. He has mastered the "background material."

In the background is first of all the life of the present Pope. The biography included in this book is certainly interesting and seems very adequate, although it, too, is rather secular. Like a good American reporter, Mr. Morgan really investigated the mountain climbing—for instance—and found that Achille Ratti was a genuinely eminent Alpinist. The Pontiff's social background is elucidated, and his succession of wonderfully executed jobs. The impression of Pope Pius after the examination is the one generally given: of a powerful, learned and intelligent, and remorselessly diligent ecclesiastic, immersed in the temporal as well as spiritual life of the Church, leading it authoritatively with overwhelming and really mystical confidence.

The reader can find material in the book for more serious reflection than its journalistic matter was probably intended to furnish. Most spectacularly does Mr. Morgan display the imprint on the body of the Apostolic Church of the periods of the Renaissance and of the absolute monarchs. It was in those days, apparently, that the court etiquette became crystallized, that the now traditional clothes and manner were developed. Ways of doing things reach back over the centuries, and only remarkable vigor, such as that of the present Pope, is capable of making change even in details of those antique usages. St. Peter's dome is still lighted by tapers—although communication is now by Marconi and I. T. & T. The basis of the general interest of "A Reporter at the Papal Court" is, indeed, the fascinating aspect of the Papacy and the central machinery of the Church dealing with changed times. Its sure-fire news value comes from the preservation in Rome of color from the past. Its more contemporary centers of interest are the contest between the Pope and Mussolini during and soon after the settlement of the Roman Question, and the recent triumph of Pope Pius over his first illness.

PHILIP BURNHAM.

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During these times of public discussions and actual friction between the forces of the underprivileged and those of the overprivileged, a new, more exhaustive biography of one of the first humanitarians could not be more timely. Father Kearns gives us a complete picture of the life of the mulatto of Lima.

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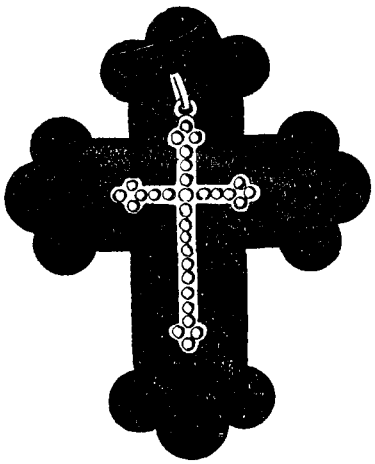

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Judith and Holofernes

The Green Grape, by Simonne Ratel. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

UNLIKE many young modern novelists Simonne Ratel procured a sound classical education before she began her career, and her work shows it. Her first novel, "The House in the Hills," won the Prix Interallié in 1932. Her second, "The Green Grape," seems even better. Obviously much care went into its preparation. Although capable of standing alone, the new book is really part of the old. The same characters, the Durras family, are introduced. The education of the children, the domestic and spiritual relations of them all, just before the war, supply the background. Clever imagery, gaiety and a frankly intuitive discussion of human foibles provide interest. Mlle. Ratel writes with real wisdom as well as with brilliance, and few authors have dealt as sympathetically with the emotional undercurrents of life.

In Part II of "The Green Grape" the spirit of M. Durras, killed in the war, continues to cast its defeatist shadow over the lives of the three children, and over the future of Isabelle, the widow. She becomes Judith pursued by the shadow of Holofernes, whence the title. What happens to their characters in this symbiosis of spiritual attuning will interest any thinking reader.

"The Green Grape" is hardly likely to be a best seller; but in the opinion of this reviewer its chance for permanency is much better than is that of any other recent novel that he has read. This book is an ultra-modern masterpiece, compounded of classicism, post-war symbolism and originality; and in addition to vivacity and charm it has power and a spirituality of its own.

LLOYD W. ESHLEMAN.

College Comedy

Academic Procession, by James Reid Parker. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.00.

THIS is a delightful and delicious little book. Its subject-matter is the college community. All the leading characters are there—the new professor, the faculty wives, the administrative committees, the janitor, the professors of psychiatry and all other subjects, an occasional reference to students and, supremely, the president and the member of the board of trustees who has recently moved to the college community and becomes a nuisance.

About this serious life of the college the author, James Reid Parker, embodies the comic spirit in his light, gracious, and sometimes devastating interpretation. The result on the reader is often rollicking laughter or just a very good chuckle, or more frequently, a gentle smile. The book might very well be termed, in Meredith's sense, the comedy of a college community, for over its terrible seriousness, its ultra-respectability, its feasts of reason, and its little politics, the comic spirit looks on and laughs. Over its bombast, its pedantry, its vanity, and its own self-conviction of its great purpose, there is cast a kindly humor.

EDWARD A. FITZPATRICK.

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Briefer Mention

Massachusetts: A Guide to Its Places and People, by the Federal Writers' Project. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.50. With its lovely photographs and general essays on history, government and the arts, healthily, if sometimes self-consciously "socially aware," and with a literary rather than telegraphic style, the WPA has successfully turned out a new kind of guidebook. Because of its different virtues, it cannot include the pleasing dryness and objectivity by which "Baedekers" gained so wide and devoted a fandom.

Man, Bread and Destiny, by C. C. Furnas and S. M. Furnas. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock. $3.00. A highly journalistic, at times hard-boiled, compendium of considerable information and some fanciful conjecture on the history and present status of vitamins, diet and health somewhat marred by a few gratuitous gibes at the Church.

Christ the Leader, by W. H. Russell. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company. $2.00. An important new text for high school and freshman college students which portrays His life as a dynamo sending out energy for Christlike living. Special emphasis is placed on the practical application of Christian principles to modern problems.

What Is Your Name?, by Benjamin Francis Musser. Manchester, N. H.: The Magnificat Press. $2.00. An invaluable aid to parents of a brand new baby who do not choose to inflict it with a name which it would not be becoming for a Christian to bear.

Spurs to Conversion, by Edward M. Betowski. New York: Benziger Brothers. $2.75. A sincere and well-informed account of the methods of conversion that have stood the test of experience. The interesting essays could be made the basis of more than one course of timely sermons.

CONTRIBUTORS

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